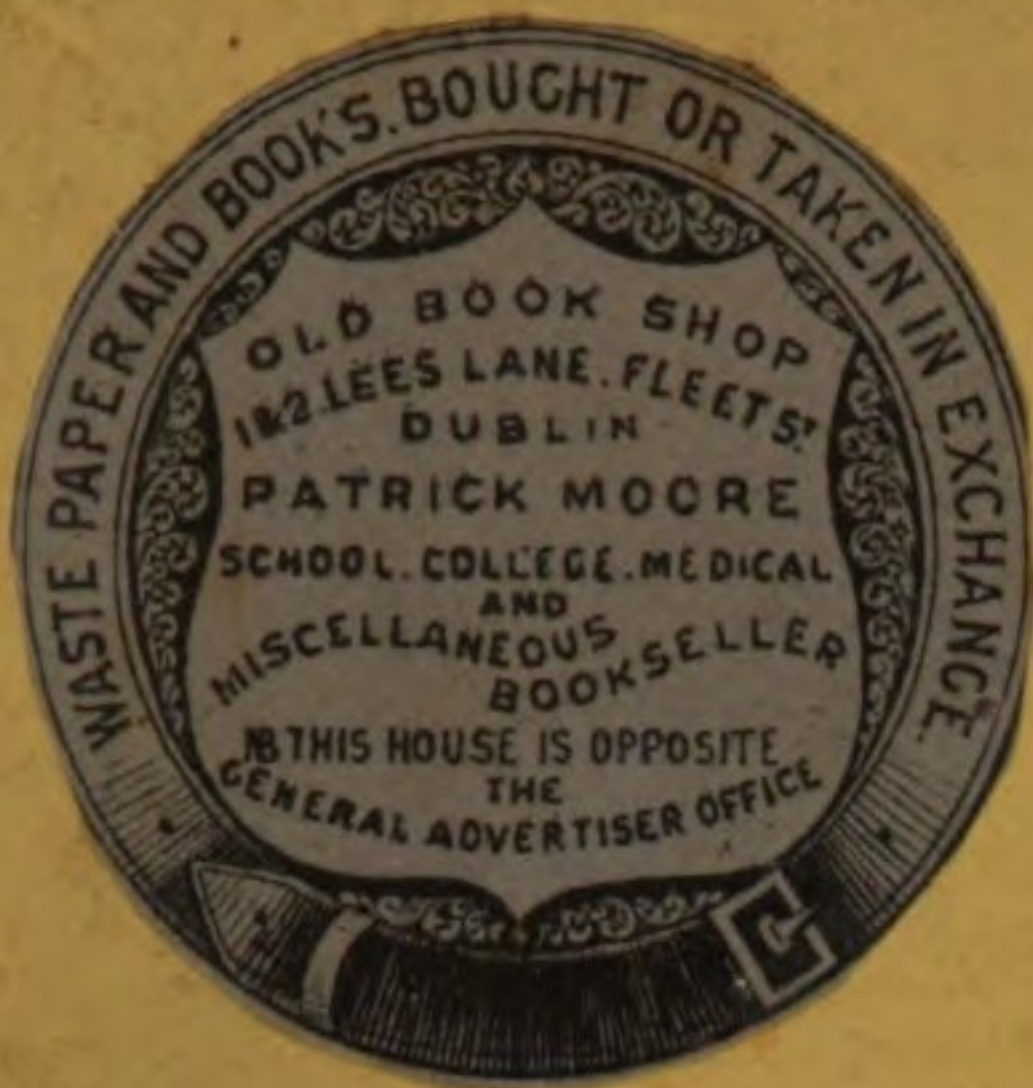


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To the Editor of
The Eclectic Review
With
The Publisher's Compts.

Miss Rose O. Toole -
Dublin Oct. 15/66 -

To be carefully studied
& read for her
advancement and
improvement

No. 10 of Series of
The Federal Bureau
of Investigation
U. S. Department of Justice

REFLECTIONS ON CHURCH MUSIC.

REFLECTIONS
ON
CHURCH MUSIC.

FOR THE CONSIDERATION OF

Churchgoers in General.

BY
CARL ENGEL.

"I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also."
1 Cor. xiv. 15.

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REFLECTIONS
ON
CHURCH MUSIC.

The Requisite Knowledge of Church Music.

IF we consider how universally Music is cultivated in our day, and how an acquaintance with this beautiful art is regarded by many as a necessary acquirement in refined education, it cannot but surprise us that where it is employed for the highest purpose—in Church—it should be comparatively neglected, and its mighty influence abused.

It is true, from time to time we hear urgent and energetic voices for the necessity of improvement, combined with such reasonable suggestions as must, without doubt, have some beneficial influence. However, usually too little regard is paid to the actual musical state of our congregations, and plans are advocated which, under present circumstances, cannot properly be carried out.

Some of the books which have appeared upon this interesting subject cannot fail to fill the reader with admiration, for the great historical as well as musical knowledge displayed in

them. Not only the manner is detailed in which the first Christians sung their hymns in their hiding-places, where they retired to worship unmolested by their heathen persecutors; but also the musical performances of the Hebrews and Greeks are described with a minuteness as if the writer had attended the rehearsals.

However interesting such information may be to some musical men, it can be of but little practical use to the generality of the congregation, who are almost entirely unacquainted with music.

But is it really requisite that every member of the congregation should acquire some knowledge of church music?

In church every one has to join in the songs of praise, penitence, supplication, and thanksgiving. Old and young, of all classes and abilities, unite their voices for the same purpose. If in our intercourse with others we must understand exactly what we undertake, in order to accomplish it appropriately, is it not even more incumbent upon us to understand clearly the manner in which we address the Lord our Maker? And if in our ordinary transactions it ought to be our aim to execute them as well as possible, how can our proceeding be justified if we come before God and utter what we do not half understand, in a manner which is almost entirely strange to us? Therefore, not only those who take particular interest in music, but every churchgoer without exception, be he musical or not, has a certain obligation to acquire some knowledge of church music.

If all were really convinced of this, the good effect would soon be perceptible in the increased solemnity of our public worship; for the proper employment of church music is one of the most effectual means of giving solemnity and dignity to divine worship. This has also been acknowledged by almost all nations in all ages, whatever their religion.

The Christian Church has been especially, from the beginning, the promoter and fosterer of sacred music. Our Saviour himself sang hymns with his disciples (Matt. xxvi. 30), and his apostles exhorted the Christians to the employment of sacred music:—

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.”—Colos. iii. 16.

“Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.”—Eph. v. 19.

“I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also.”—1 Cor. xiv. 15.

Even those who admit that in general we are bound to make ourselves well acquainted with our church music, not seldom find sundry pretexts for this obligation being dispensed with in their own particular case. The most usual excuses are, perhaps,—“I have no talent for music;”—“I have no time for practising;”—“I have no voice;”—“I am now too old, and it would be all useless trouble,” &c. It may, however, easily be seen that such reasons are, in most cases, unfounded, and only signify,—“I do not take any interest in the matter;”—“I find it too troublesome to practise;”—“I have really never attempted to cultivate my voice,” &c.

Many a one may have but little talent for music; but scarcely any one is entirely without it, though sometimes it may seem so where it has never been awakened and developed. Moreover, much talent is here not required.

There are also very few persons who would not be able to find some leisure time for pursuits about which they are

really anxious. And as truly may it be asserted that every one, with few rare exceptions, is able to learn singing, though his voice may appear at first rough and unmusical enough; indeed, it could scarcely be otherwise, if he never before has taken any trouble to cultivate it.

Being deeply impressed with the conviction that the advantage would be incalculable if people in general were to become more familiar with church music, the author of this book is particularly anxious to assist in this pursuit, by giving in plain words such explanations as would lead to the desired result. Wishing to be as easily comprehensible as possible, he will imagine himself addressing a number of persons, of whom only a few are really musical, while a larger portion have some little knowledge of music, but the majority know nothing about it at all. Most of our congregations are thus constituted.

Considering that the chief purpose of church music is to increase and strengthen our devotional feelings, and to heighten the solemnity of divine worship, it will appear that such information is especially required as leads to a clear comprehension of its essential qualities, and consequently to the power of distinguishing it from such music as is not *genuine* church music, and therefore unfit to be employed in the celebration of divine worship, however beautiful it may be in itself. In fact, as we must clearly understand and be impressed with the sense of our prayer, so that it shall not be a mere babbling of empty words, and that we may be sure not to express anything profane and improper, so must we learn to comprehend and be impressed with the music also.

Our church music is either such as is especially adapted for the whole congregation actively to join in—as, for instance, the singing of a metrical psalm or a hymn; or it is of such a kind that the congregation cannot actively participate

in its performance—as, for instance, the anthem, which is intended for a certain number of practised singers, or the voluntary, played by the organist.

Concerning the music in which we are actively to engage, it is particularly important for us to learn to join in such a manner as will best promote our devotion. For this reason an acquaintance with the most important rules for singing is indispensable. It is, however, not sufficient to know how to sing *alone*. In joining with others in singing, several things must be observed which do not occur in singing alone.

Also, that music in which we have not actively to participate should be clear and comprehensible to us. Some, however, seem to think that it may be listened to with indifference, or regarded as affording a pleasant opportunity for some moments' relaxation. It is unnecessary to show how erroneous such views are, after the conclusion we have already come to. We shall, consequently, endeavour to become better acquainted with the essential qualities of church music, with the most important rules to be observed in singing, with congregational singing, with the kinds of music suitable for congregational use, with organ-playing, and with choir-singing.

Afterwards it will be useful if we endeavour to become acquainted with those means for further improvement which, if judiciously pursued, must lead to a more general diffusion of efficiency in music, and consequently to that higher result which, under present circumstances, is not attainable.

Essential Qualities of Church Music.

As the chief object of Church Music is to promote the honour of God and the edification of man, it must above all things possess those qualities which add to the solemnity of divine worship, and which further the pious yielding of the heart to the worship of God. From this we may deduce the following conclusions :—

It must be in its character devotional, free from every taint of the passionate and the sensual, as well as pure from every admixture of vulgarity or meanness. It must be simple; and consequently without such ornaments, accompaniments, or other additions as are unimportant; and without abrupt, startling, or violent alternations in the movement.

Devotional music naturally demands a moderate movement; at least it does not permit any near approach to extremes with respect to *slow* and *quick*. From this, however, it does not follow that variety of movement is excluded from devotional music. A hymn of praise obviously requires a movement very different from that of a hymn of penitence.

Neither must it be inferred from what has been said, that it may be monotonous, devoid of expression, energy, and arousing spirit. On the contrary, with no music is it more imperatively necessary that it should have been written with

real inspiration ; otherwise it would be ill qualified indeed for its high and noble purpose.

It must be easily comprehensible, as it has to promote the devotion of the congregation collectively, of whom the greater portion have little or no musical knowledge.

That music is the most easily comprehensible in which an expressive melody is prominent.

By *melody* is understood a succession of single notes, producing an agreeable impression, or a musical idea. An expressive melody requires a distinct *rhythm*, or a symmetrical arrangement of time and motion ; without this its clearness is considerably impeded.

We do not allude here, of course, to that sickly-sentimental melody, and that showy rhythm, which are now so usual in church as well as in the theatre. Nothing can be more objectionable. However, many people are pleased with such nonsense, and their taste is so much spoiled by it that nothing healthy will be relished by them.

Some persons assume that music which is written with more than usual art, must necessarily be obscure to non-musical men. This is, however, not always the case, as may be easily proved. Few compositions are more universally admired than Mozart's masterly overture to the opera *Die Zauberflöte* ; yet its form resembles, to a great extent, that of a *fugue*, a kind of composition which is of a particularly artificial construction. Also many of our most popular songs, secular as well as sacred, are cleverly constructed in their different parts.

A great many of those fugues and similar compositions which are employed in church, consist, however, only of a combination of dry calculations, which testify to the composer's theoretical knowledge, but which are evidently written

without any pious inspiration. Such learned music is certainly unintelligible to the people. If they think they are impressed by it, it is generally a self-delusion; or perhaps they pretend to admire it for the sake of appearing to understand it better than others. Even upon those comparatively few persons to whom it is intelligible, it acts only disadvantageously, as it occupies their minds with the rules of musical composition, and leads them to forget the object for which they entered the church.

It must be subservient to the worship. Music out of church is generally performed entirely for its own sake. In the concert-room we listen to the performance of a symphony for no other purpose than that of enjoying the music. In church this is different. We do not go to church for the sake of the music: we employ music only as a *means*. It must, consequently, contain nothing which would distract our attention from the chief object which we have in view. If vocal music, it must not demand any alterations or distortions of the words: their right meaning must not be hidden, or be in any way modified.

It is obvious that this ought to be especially the case with that music which forms part of the service itself. In pieces which are interpolated or added to the service, the license which is often taken with respect to the treatment of the words may be less objectionable; but here also it is incompatible with the real purpose of church music to make the words suffer for the sake of the music.

Hitherto we have endeavoured to point out those qualities which chiefly distinguish church music from other music, because they are indispensable to the former, but not to the latter. There are, however, many conditions which appertain to all good music, of whatever class it may be, and which are,

therefore, also essential in genuine church music. We shall mention here some of the most important, which are, unfortunately, at present often not found in our music in church.

It must be beautiful. In all those arts which are called the Fine Arts, whose chief aim it is to contribute to our happiness, and to ennoble the heart by giving us pleasure and by refining the taste, Beauty is one of the first requisites. Not only should the single ideas, of which the musical composition is formed, be in themselves beautiful; but they should also be so connected as to form a beautiful whole, which gives a distinct and agreeable impression.

This is in music the more important, as we can only at the end of a composition gain a general impression; while in a picture, for instance, this is attained almost instantaneously, as we have the whole work at once before us.

It must be in accordance with the words. In vocal music, where poetry and music are combined, the better suited they are to each other, the more complete is the impression which is produced.

In our music at present employed in church, its fitness to the words is, however, not unfrequently but little regarded. Several verses of a hymn, each of which expresses a different sentiment—the first, perhaps, grief, the second penitence, the third rejoicing—are all to be sung to the same melody, which is repeated with each verse. In a psalm, one chant, which is suitable to the words of the commencement, but not at all to a great portion of those which follow, is to serve for the whole. Suppose we were not acquainted with the words of the responses to the Commandments, could we, from the music to which they are generally sung, rationally expect that they are: “Lord, have mercy upon us,” &c.? Might we not rather conclude that a fragment of a fashionable love-song had, through an inexplicable accident, slipped in?

Instances may also be found in which the composer has not expressed the meaning of a sentence, but that of a single word, without reference to the sense in which it occurs. Thus, the word *tomb* is expressed in low and subdued notes; the word *happiness*, in high and loud ones. It would not be worth while noticing such absurdities, were they not so often to be met with. Moreover, they are not only suffered, but even find admirers.

It must allow the right accentuation of the words. The rule of giving the accent in music to the proper syllables of the words cannot be disregarded without offending against good sense and good taste. For instance, we must not have to sing *writ̄ing* instead of *writ̄ing*; or *merc̄iful* instead of *merc̄iful*. Neither must the music interfere with the emphasis being laid upon the proper word of a sentence.

It must be original, which means that it must not consist of ideas borrowed from other works, but it must have been really invented by its author. The originality of a composition suffers when the composition is *arranged*, that is to say, when it is transferred and adapted from one instrument or voice to another; when it is abridged, prolonged, or altered in any other way. It may be said, as a general rule, that the more complete a work of art is, the more easily it suffers from any alteration. Hence we see how much a good vocal composition must suffer if the original words are thrown aside, and others substituted. For this reason, much of our sacred music, which is of a highly devotional character, cannot be advantageously employed in our divine worship. This is, for instance, the case with many compositions of the old Italian masters, which are written for the Roman Catholic Church, and which, consequently, require a substitution of words, and in most instances also an arrangement of the music.

Indeed, every one who is able to appreciate the nicety and

exactness with which our great composers have written their works, will understand that these sublime effusions cannot be cut and turned, fitted, and otherwise treated like the workmanship of an artisan. But how little is this generally regarded! Where do we hear more arranged music from all kinds of secular as well as sacred compositions than in church? It is true there are some compositions which have been so successfully arranged that they are as good, or perhaps better, than the original. The magnificent chorus in the *Messiah*, "For unto us a child is born," was arranged by Handel from a piece which he had previously written. But cases of this kind are rare exceptions, and prove, if anything, only the rule.

It has been sometimes objected that several of our best old psalm-tunes were originally national melodies. This is true; but it must not be forgotten that they were arranged at the time of the Reformation, by men possessed not only of great musical talent, but of such religious zeal as is at present rarely found in our composers;—by men who could also compose truly devotional music. Besides, about three hundred years ago, our secular music itself much resembled sacred music. This may be seen in the *madrigals* and other secular compositions of that time. The church was almost exclusively the fosterer of music, and thence the secular music chiefly derived its nourishment. At present, just the contrary is the case.

There can be therefore no doubt that the admission of so much arranged music is one of the chief causes of the present unsatisfactory state of our music in church.

Some arrangements from secular compositions are doubly unsuitable, on account of their frivolity, and also from the association of ideas generally connected with them. Thus, there are some German bacchanalian songs introduced into

the English Church, which have retained much of their original frivolity, and which must be particularly objectionable there to all who know them in their unecclesiastical dress.

Supposing that music possesses all the qualities which have been enumerated, there may be yet instances in which it does not exactly answer its purpose, and when it ought certainly not to be admitted into divine worship. The most usual are the following :—

If it is not in conformity with the character of the service. It is evident that the same music which answers its purpose excellently on Christmas Day, would be quite out of place on a fast day; or that the melody of a hymn which is admirably suited for Good Friday, could not properly be used on Easter Sunday. But the character of the services on Sundays also varies throughout the Christian year, so that the music must be somewhat different, in order to suit the particular occasion.

Not only the vocal music, but also the voluntaries and other pieces played by the organist, must be selected with this view. It is only thus that an entire appropriate impression can be obtained.

If it is too difficult. In this case vexatious mistakes in the performance are the unavoidable result. Besides, the attention of the performers is necessarily almost exclusively engaged in overcoming the difficulties, so that the real object for which the people attend divine worship, is, to a great extent, lost sight of, and true edification is out of the question.

That music especially which is to be sung by the whole congregation, should be as easy as possible. Neither very high nor very low notes should occur; only such should be used as every one can sing without great exertion. Each

syllable should have but one note. Wide distances from one note to another should be avoided, as well as shakes and other ornaments of that kind; not only on account of the difficulties which they offer to uninitiated singers, but also because they are so apt to lessen that simplicity which, as we have seen, is indispensable in genuine church music.

It must not be thought that such restrictions must necessarily interfere with the expression and the beauty of the music in general. Some of our most expressive tunes are written without ornaments, and in a small compass. Our National Anthem consists of only a few notes; and the French philosopher Rousseau wrote an air in only three notes, which is by no means devoid of expression.

If it is too long. In many instances it would greatly contribute to the attainment of a correct and dignified performance if the music were of shorter duration. The most beautiful music loses in interest if it is too long. The natural consequence is, that the attention and the exertions of the performers flag, and a satisfactory impression cannot be gained.

Also a frequent repetition of the same tune, as in some hymns and metrical psalms, may easily become tedious and tiresome, especially if it is in a slow movement and uniform motion. In congregational singing this sometimes occasions a kind of drowsiness, which, though it is now less frequently to be met with than in former times, is yet by no means a rare occurrence. Dr. Burney gives a lively description of it in his *Present State of Music in Germany* (published in the year 1775). Visiting on a Sunday morning the Cathedral in Bremen, he heard a monotonous psalm-tune repeated ten or twelve times. Of course he grew tired, and left the church to see the town. Returning to the same place two hours after, he still found the people all singing, as loud as they could, the same tune to the same accompaniment. He says,

“I went to the post-office, to make dispositions for my departure, and, rather from curiosity than the love of such music, I returned once more to this church, and, to my great astonishment, still found them vocally and organically performing the same ditty, whose duration seems to have exceeded that of a Scots psalm in the time of Charles I.”

If the learned doctor had not concluded too hastily from the first impression, as travellers are sometimes apt to do, he might have ascertained that in some churches in Germany it is the custom to sing some verses of the same tune at the beginning, in the middle, and at the conclusion of the service; and it would have occurred to him that he must accidentally have popped in just when the singing was resumed. This would probably have led him to state more exactly the truth, which is bad enough without his exaggeration.

Important Rules for Singing.

THE art of singing is certainly not easy, and a proficiency in it requires much practice and perseverance, even by those who are gifted with a fine voice and with decided talent.

If in congregational singing, anything artistic, or even approaching it, were indispensable, its cultivation had better never be attempted. Experience, however, has shown that a dignified mode of singing by the whole congregation is quite attainable, if certain rules are observed, which every one has it in his power more or less to adopt. These rules are here offered, and should be strictly followed.

The singing must be in tune. It is a necessary condition that the notes must be given in their right pitch, and, consequently, neither too low nor too high. If this is not properly attended to, the music will be, as it is called, *out of tune*, which produces an unpleasant effect, and is sometimes in church quite annoying and disturbing.

And it is not sufficient that each note be intoned properly, but it must also be well sustained as long as it lasts; or, in other words, it must not deviate from its pitch, but it must remain equal without wavering or trembling.

In order to achieve this, our strict attention will be required for a time; but it will soon become easier to us, especially if

the music is within a limited compass, and if the notes succeed each other in a simple and easy way. We have already stated that the music intended for congregational use especially requires to be as easy as possible.

The time of attendance upon divine worship is, of course, the most ill chosen for practising singing. But there are few who do not know some tune by heart, which they might sing over at home, with the view of giving exactly the right notes. If the experiment is perseveringly repeated for a time, with care, and perhaps with the help of a pianoforte or other instrument, they will soon be surprised how much they improve.

Some persons consider it impossible for them to learn to sing in tune, as they fancy they have *no ear* for music, by which is meant a naturally imperfect ability of distinguishing exactly two different notes from each other. A little closer investigation would however, in most cases, lead to the conviction that those defects in singing which are so readily ascribed to the want of ear for music, are in reality only occasioned by the imperfect cultivation of our vocal organs, and perhaps not unfrequently through mere listlessness.

The pleasant impression of a correct intonation is greatly enhanced if the voice is *pure*, which means, if it is free from roughness, coarseness, or other unpleasant qualities. A pure voice originates in the chest, and passes through the mouth unimpeded and unconstrained.

In a fine voice the notes appear not only *pure*, but *full* and *round*, which means that they keep the proper medium between too broad and too thin. It would, however, be unreasonable to expect that every member of the congregation should have a fine voice; especially it cannot be expected with grown-up people who never have practised singing. With *singing in tune* it is different: this is indispensable, and

must therefore be earnestly aimed at by every one without exception.

The words must be properly pronounced. As reading, to be comprehensible and expressive, requires every word to be pronounced correctly and distinctly, so in singing the right pronunciation of the words must not be neglected, as otherwise it would neither be intelligible nor agreeable.

How deficient congregational singing usually is in this respect, may be experienced in almost every church; since the reason that the words are scarcely ever intelligible to the hearer, lies chiefly in the inefficient and careless way in which they are uttered. Even where the singing of the people is otherwise satisfactory, it necessarily loses in dignity and beauty if the proper pronunciation of the words is not attended to. It is therefore imperative upon us to give due consideration to this point.

The pronunciation of the *vowels* gives, on the whole, less trouble than that of the consonants. And it is chiefly for this reason that the Italian language, in which so many vowels occur, is better qualified for vocal music than the English or the German. The different sound of the vowels is produced by slightly altering the shape of the mouth. The *consonants*, which can only be used in connection with the vowels, are produced in different ways: some by closing the lips, others by pushing the tongue against the teeth, and so on.

In order to improve, it is necessary, in the first place, to find out what mistakes we are most liable to make. Certain peculiarities in pronunciation are to be met with in some parts of the country which do not occur in others; and sometimes a person has difficulty in enunciating certain sounds properly, in consequence of the peculiar formation of his teeth, his lips, &c. We must endeavour to find out whether we have any such impediments.

Some consonants require particular care, in order to pronounce them well in singing. The letters *s* and *c*, for instance, may easily be too much hissed, especially when they occur at the beginning of a word. Common mistakes are also, the aspiration of a mute initial *h*, as—*honour*, *hour*;—the omitting of the *h* at the beginning of a word where it ought to be aspirated, as—(*h*)oly, (*h*)eart;—the drawing over of a consonant from the end of a word to the following word, if this begins with a vowel;—and others.

The right pronunciation of the words is sometimes impeded by a badly regulated breathing. To draw breath at the proper place is of great importance in singing, and good singers give therefore much attention to it. In congregational singing, where a strict observance of many rules cannot be expected, it must be regarded as sufficient if only no annoying and disturbing mistakes in this respect are perceptible: such, for instance, as the taking breath in the middle of a word, as *fa-hather*, *ho-oly*, &c.; mistakes which most easily occur in a very slow and dragging singing.

It is advisable to prepare ourselves a little at home, by reading aloud what we have to sing in church. By this means we may prevent our attention, while singing in church, from being too much absorbed by the endeavour to pronounce correctly, and being perhaps distracted from the prayer itself. However, such a preparation cannot always be effected, as in many instances the churchgoer is ignorant of what words he will have to sing in the service.

It is true, some words require to be pronounced rather differently in singing to what they do in reading; and we are also apt to commit faults in singing, with respect to pronunciation, which would not occur in reading. But, on the whole, the previous reading of the words aloud, is an excellent preparation, and is in the power of almost every one.

It must be sung with ease. Congregational singing must remain in a very unsatisfactory state until the people have become capable of singing with a certain degree of ease.

Until this is the case, the singing will be timid, and will lead to a sort of quavering or feeling for the note; or it will lead to drawling, as the singer will be inclined to wait until he has heard the note given by the organ, or by others, before he joins.

In order to become capable of singing with ease, we must not neglect any opportunity of impressing the music, as much as possible, upon our memory. Those who are musical can easily become familiar at home with the tunes generally used; and of those who are not musical themselves, many may have opportunity to hear and learn them from their musical friends.

In former times it was not unusual in families to unite in singing sacred hymns; in modern times this has, like many other good old customs, gradually become less and less observed.

Avoid making alterations. A common fault is, that people make alterations, by omitting or adding notes: the latter is more frequently the case than the former.

In our best music for congregational use there is generally only *one* note to be sung to each syllable of a word. Now, it may not unfrequently be heard that some of the people sing several notes to the same syllable, introducing between two successive notes one or more intermediate notes. The cause of this is perhaps a want of certainty, which induces them thus to find their way from one note to the following.

Much mischief is sometimes occasioned by those who fancy they can beautify the melody, by introducing ornamental notes. Just those who are musical, and who ought to know better, often set a bad example in this respect; others, who

are ignorant of music, approve of and readily imitate what they hear done by accomplished singers or organists.

In certain kinds of secular music, composed for a single voice, some ornaments, added by the performer, may perhaps be not out of place; but in our devotional music in church, when introduced at random by members of the congregation, they are always an offence, even if they are well executed, which scarcely ever is the case.

Would it not justly be considered inexcusable if, in church, people were to alter according to their own fancy the text of a hymn—if they were to omit words, to substitute others, and so on? If this is to be considered highly improper, why should not a similar consideration be shown to the music?

Some persons, who have more confidence in their musical skill than others, attempt to sing a kind of accompaniment, or the bass-notes, imagining they heighten in this manner the beauty of congregational singing; but, in fact, just the contrary is the case. Supposing every one were to follow thus his own whim, what a mixture of different discordant notes would be the result, what uncleanness and confusion would arise, and how would the melody itself be hidden and lost! And what must become at last of our venerable sacred tunes, if every one may alter them thus at his pleasure? It is a well-known fact that our old metrical psalm-tunes have in this way gradually lost much of their original power and rhythmical beauty.

Avoid singing too loud. It is not unusual that people over-exert their voice, and produce harsh and piercing notes in consequence. The cause of this often is the endeavour to produce a full and very impressive tone.

But it must be remembered that, as each voice is limited to a certain compass, so it is limited also to a certain degree of strength. Any overstepping of the limits offends the ear;

and the less the voice is cultivated, the more unpleasant is the effect, if it is overstrained. The higher notes of females and children are especially harsh if they are sung too loud. Indeed sometimes they deprive our congregational singing of all its solemnity!

It is scarcely possible to presume that those who shout instead of sing, do feel and understand where they are, and what they are celebrating; since a clear consciousness of this would naturally influence to modify the strength of the voice.

Avoid singing in an under-tone. If our voice is too much subdued—if our singing is but a mere murmuring or whispering—there is also a great doubt whether it really comes from the heart. And by such a proceeding it is not possible for our congregational singing to attain that elevating solemnity by which it ought to be characterised.

Some persons have the habit of holding the head down while singing, by which a clear sound of the voice, as well as a distinct pronunciation of the words, is much impeded.

Sing with expression. It is obvious that, in order to sing with due expression, it is necessary that we are fully impressed with the words as well as with the music which we sing; since, “out of the fulness of the heart the mouth speaketh.” A previous attentive reading of the words will greatly facilitate this.

If several verses have to be sung to the same tune—as in metrical psalms and hymns—it is not possible that the music should be always alike strictly in accordance with the words, as the emotions expressed in the different verses are never precisely alike. In this case the music gives only the general sentiment of the whole, and it devolves upon the singer to modify his voice so as to give the proper expression to each single verse.

The occasion on which we sing will naturally influence our expression. Thus, at the celebration of Christmas, Easter, and similar festivals, our singing will be more animated and joyful; while on Good Friday and other fast days and days of humiliation, such a mode of singing would be in opposition to our feelings; indeed, it would deeply offend them.

The expression may be easily exaggerated. To good music an exaggerated or affected expression is always desecrating; and such expression is especially incompatible with the dignity of devotional music.

To observe with artistical nicety the finer shades of expression, is, of course, not to be expected in congregational singing. The expression which constitutes the beauty of congregational singing is of that kind which is called forth by religious fervour and inspiration.

Sing in an appropriate movement. It depends not so much upon the people as upon the organist or leader, to determine the movement; nevertheless, a few hints upon the subject may prove useful.

In vocal music, the degree of quickness or slowness is principally dependent upon the general impression which the words convey.

In some kinds of vocal compositions there may be, in the course of the piece, sometimes a deviation from the original movement, in order to give the sentence a more appropriate expression. Yet this is seldom desirable in congregational singing; since not only its dignity is apt to suffer by it, but also unnecessary difficulties are occasioned.

It happens, sometimes, that the organist, in order to counteract the tendency to drawling and drowsy singing, takes the movement remarkably fast; the consequence generally is, a hasty and hurried singing, which is no more a

proof of real animation and spirit, than is the fast talking of a man.

If people are only impressed by what they sing, as they ought to be, there will be no lack of true animation and spirit, and they will sing with energy and fervour even in a moderate movement.

On Congregational Singing.

WE purpose now to submit some practical observations on the most appropriate mode of uniting the voices of the congregation. We are the more bound to give our earnest consideration to everything concerning this subject, as it is treated in a somewhat unsatisfactory manner by most professed promoters of Church Music. Either there are claims made on the powers of a congregation similar to those of a trained and well-practised choir, or the singing of the people is spoken of rather contemptuously, on the pretext that by its very nature it can never be of much musical merit.

On the unreasonableness of demanding from the congregation nearly as much as from professional musicians, it is unnecessary to enlarge here, after what has already been said about it. But it remains to be shown, that those who regard congregational singing with a kind of contempt, as being too inartificial or rude, take also but a one-sided view.

There can be no doubt, that where the execution of the music is left entirely to practised musicians, as, for instance, where it is confined to the choir and to the organist—it will, with respect to correctness, generally be superior. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied, that congregational singing has

certain peculiar advantages which no other music in church possesses, however admirable it may be in itself. It is of importance that these should be rightly appreciated by the churchgoer. We shall therefore endeavour to point them out.

Peculiar Advantages of Congregational Singing.—It is a fact, settled by the experience of centuries, that congregational singing is particularly adapted to exercise the greatest influence in promoting the religious feelings of the people. The reason must, to a great extent, be ascribed to the circumstance that the music, in the execution of which we assist, is generally much more apt to produce a deep and lasting impression upon us, than that to which we only listen. As the responses, which are spoken by us in an audible and distinct voice, appeal to our heart more powerfully, and leave a more indelible impression than those which we only think or whisper, thus also—but even in a higher degree—the sacred songs in which we ourselves join, with the voice as well as with the heart, are, above all others, adapted to kindle and to maintain our pious emotions.

It is true there are instances in which the impression of the music cannot be so complete upon those who assist in its execution, as upon others. The musician who takes part in the performance of an orchestral piece, will hear his own instrument, and perhaps those of his colleagues immediately around him, too predominant; consequently he is less likely to gain an exact impression of the whole, than the auditor placed at a proper distance from the orchestra. But in congregational singing it is altogether different. Provided it is so constituted, as we shall presently see it ought to be, there is nothing to prevent those who assist in it from attaining a distinct and full impression of the whole—an impression which will be heightened in proportion to the earnestness of their own co-operation.

Also the fact that *all the people* participate, little and great, whatever their individual endowments and their heart's concern may be—that *all* unite their voices for the same solemn purpose—must certainly be considered a peculiar advantage.

And it must be remembered that this powerful influence of congregational music seems to have been especially appreciated at the most important epochs in the history of our Church. In the apostolic age, congregational singing was one of the forms of social Christian worship. The early Church fostered and encouraged it during several centuries. If it was afterwards gradually all but discontinued, we find that it was resumed with the greater vigour by those who stood up to shake off the corruptions which in course of time had interfered with the pure celebration of Christian worship. Already, about a century before the Reformation, we find the followers of Huss ardently and successfully cultivating congregational music. And how deeply its beneficial power was felt by most of our Reformers, might, if it were not known from history, be gathered from the fact that, in the Liturgy, on several occasions, especial opportunity is given for the hearty co-operation of the people.

Diversity of Opinion on the Union of the Voices.—There is a diversity of opinion amongst musical men, as to whether the congregation ought to sing in *harmony* or in *unison*.

In order to show more clearly which of these two modes of singing is in reality most suitable, we shall state, in a few words, the arguments generally advanced on each side, without, however, adopting the bitter tone in which the dispute is so often conducted.

But, before we proceed to this, it is necessary to give a short explanation of what is understood by *singing in harmony*, and *singing in unison*.

Singing in Harmony.—The sounding together of several

notes which have a certain relation to each other, is called a *chord*. And as different combinations of notes are possible, so there are, consequently, different kinds of chords. A short definition of *melody* has already been given. *Harmony* is such a succession of chords as produces a musical idea, in a similar manner as *melody* is a succession of single notes.

A succession of chords, each of which consists of *four* notes, is called a *four-part* harmony. In vocal music, the four-part harmony is generally intended for two female voices and two male voices: viz., for a high female voice, *treble* or *soprano*; for a low female voice, *alto*; for a high male voice, *tenor*; and for a low male voice, *bass*. The treble and alto are also sung by boys.

It must be remarked that in such a harmony each part has its own individual course. We have therefore here, so to say, four different melodies which have to be sung together, producing a succession of chords, or, in another word—harmony.

It is, however, not necessary that these four melodies must be all of equal importance. It is often the case that one of them is much more characteristic and impressive than the others. This is the chief melody, or the tune, while the others are subordinate melodies.

Neither is it necessary that a harmony should be written in *four* parts. It may be in *five* parts, as, for instance, for a first treble, a second treble, alto, tenor, and bass. Or it may be only in *three* parts, as, for instance, for treble, tenor, and bass. Or it may be for any other possible combination of voices.

If the composition is of such a kind that each part of the harmony is intended to be sung by several singers instead of one singer, it is called a *chorus*.

The manner in which the different parts are united, and the combination of the chords, are subject to certain rules which form part of the theory of music, and which must, of course, be well known by every skilled musician.

Singing in Unison.—If in a composition for two or more performers, no harmony is employed, and all the performers have consequently to execute exactly the same notes, the music is said to be in *unison*. Thus, if several persons sing together the tune of a hymn, it is in unison.

It must be observed that the male voices (tenor and bass) sound an *octave* lower than the female voices (treble and alto). *Octave* is the eighth tone in that succession of tones which is called the *diatonic scale*. Every tone occurs again in the octave, either higher or lower. Those who are not musical will understand this better by looking at the keyboard of a pianoforte or organ. As the male voices sound an octave lower than the female voices, it follows that, when both sing together the same melody, this will appear in octaves. Such a singing is usually called *unison in octaves*, in order to distinguish it from that unison in which all sing not only the same notes, but also in the same pitch, and which is therefore *unison* in its strictest sense.

The inquiries whether harmony or unison is the most suitable for congregational singing, have seldom led to any satisfactory conclusion. The reason may be found, to a great extent, in the circumstance that the question has been seldom fairly investigated. While everything has been said that could possibly give weight to a favourite opinion on one side, the opposite view was but slightly touched, or altogether ignored. In order to avoid the same fault, we shall briefly state what is generally put forth by the champions of each opinion.

Arguments for Singing in Harmony.—Every one who has heard a solemn sacred composition in harmony, sung with purity and exactness by a number of persons, must grant that it is peculiarly qualified to speak to the heart, and to awaken feelings of true devotion. Indeed, no other kind of vocal

music can be considered equally sublime and powerful. This is also generally acknowledged, even by those who are of opinion that congregational singing ought to be in unison.

It is more natural to an assembly of singers to sing in harmony than to sing in unison. The pitch of the voice is so different in different individuals, that if each were to sing the same melody in the pitch which is most convenient for him, the music would by no means sound in unison. An alto voice would sing it four or five notes lower than a treble voice; and a tenor voice would sing it at a distance from the bass voice, similar to that of the alto from the treble. And this, unbearable as it would thus be if heard together, would yet, by some judicious cultivation, most naturally lead to part-singing. It follows then that the congregation is naturally better fitted for singing in harmony than in unison.

The desire which the congregation feel for singing in harmony, is evident from the endeavour of so many members to accompany the melody with some other notes, which they invent at the moment. It is therefore desirable that this apparent tendency of the people towards the most complete mode of devotional singing, should be properly directed and regulated by the cultivation of part-singing.

Even those who are advocates for congregational singing in unison, seem to feel the emptiness of such a method, as may be gathered from the fact that they generally recommend an organ accompaniment in harmony, to make up for the unsupplied parts of the voices.

If the congregation were to sing only in unison, the singing would be too monotonous and too uninteresting for the more refined taste of the better educated and the more musical members. Their hearty co-operation would probably be less to be depended upon, as they would indeed have but little opportunity of employing their skill. Singing in unison, if it

were at all desirable, could therefore be considered only fit for those who are totally ignorant of music.

Neither should it be disregarded that the triad of sounds has been regarded by pious men as a type of the Triune God. They express the opinion that the invention of sacred vocal music in harmony arose from the Trinitarian worship of the Christian Church. Hence they exhort congregations to the cultivation of singing in harmony.

Arguments for Singing in Unison.—However great the merit of sacred music sung in harmony may be, yet it must be admitted—having been sufficiently proved by experience—that the singing of a simple devotional melody by the whole congregation possesses a high dignity and elevating solemnity.

Just the circumstance that all the people sing exactly alike, word for word, and note for note, and the more perfect unity which is thereby attained, will lead the heart most irresistibly to sincere devotion.

It must be admitted, that some people seem to have a particular pleasure in inventing a kind of accompaniment; but most people prefer singing the melody. This is the easiest for every one, of whatever pitch and quality his voice may be; provided it is written in a small compass, and in such a simple and easy succession of notes, as music intended for congregational use always ought to be.

In singing in unison, the words of the congregation are more distinctly heard than in part-singing. Each member can sing with the greater fervour, because the melody or the tune is much more impressive, and is more easily remembered than any subordinate part of the harmony.

Besides, part-singing, even if it were desirable, which is not the case, is certainly quite impracticable. Not only does it require the greatest exactness in intonation and in execution, so that all who assist in it must be singers well skilled in

music—much more so, indeed, than the generality of church-goers at present are—but there must be also for each part of the harmony a proportionate number of voices, which, in church, depends entirely upon accident.

And it would be also necessary that those who sing the same part should sit together, in order to avoid confusion and disturbance.

Again, supposing all these obstacles could be overcome, is it not most probable that the attention of the people would be almost completely taken up with the difficult task to be achieved—a task which claims the fullest attention of even professional musicians, in order to be done well? Is it not most likely that in this way the real object of congregational singing would be lost sight of, and the edification of the people, after all, only be hindered instead of being promoted?

Singing in unison was employed in Christian worship long before singing in harmony was known. It was the mode of singing in the primitive Church, and has therefore, also in this respect, at least as high a claim to our consideration as singing in harmony.

Harmony and Unison combined.—It would have been tedious, if, in the foregoing apologies, we had minutely noticed all those minor arguments which are now and then advanced on either side. Most of them have but little weight, however plausible they may appear at first sight. Moreover, those arguments which have been given show clearly that each of the two modes of singing has its own characteristic merits. No wonder that it should be sometimes proposed to employ harmony and unison together, in congregational singing, in such a way that those who are somewhat acquainted with music might sing in harmony, while the others might keep to unison.

Indeed, this plan would certainly be worth adopting, if the

advantages which each of the above two modes of singing offers, could thereby be united. But just the contrary is the case, as every one who has some knowledge of the rules of harmony is quite aware. He knows that the beauty of vocal music in harmony consists chiefly in the correctness and purity in which the different parts are united. Now, if unison in octaves is combined with it, the right proportion, and the correct union of the different parts, are destroyed; the harmony does not any longer remain pure and agreeable, but becomes imperfect and unpleasant. Most musical rules allow of exceptions; at least instances may be found in which the genius of a composer has, by disregarding them, produced beautiful effects. The prohibition against introducing consecutive octaves in vocal music in harmony is, however, acknowledged and obeyed by all musicians, however different their views may be concerning the observance of many other rules.

Not only does the harmony become corrupt and unmusical by such a combination; but also the unison loses its characteristic qualities. In fact, it is no longer unison, since it is combined with other notes.

There is, however, one mode in which harmony and unison may be combined in congregational singing, and in which the unpleasant effect just mentioned is avoided: viz., by assigning the harmony to the organ accompaniment, while the congregation sing the melody in unison. The sound of the human voice is so different from that of any musical instrument, that vocal music in unison may be well combined with instrumental music in harmony, without either sacrificing its original characteristic merits, though both will unite sufficiently to heighten the effect of the music, and to produce a clear and beautiful impression. This explains why in congregational singing the unison of the voices is not destroyed by an organ.

accompaniment in harmony, and why the harmony does not suffer by the octaves in which the unison is sung.

Similar combinations of unison in octaves for voices, with instrumental accompaniment in harmony, are also to be found in the works, sacred as well as secular, of our best composers.

And it is particularly noticeable that in such a mode of congregational singing, not only most of the advantages are preserved which are pointed out by the advocates of harmony as well as those of unison; but also that the disadvantages which each sees in the system of his opponent are almost entirely obviated.

Moreover, there are certain additional advantages gained which may be mentioned here. It is evident that, as a melody is more impressive and more delightful than any part of a harmony, it is therefore best fitted to be sung *alone*. Now, it is certainly very desirable that every member of a congregation—those not excepted who by their calling, or other circumstances, are prevented from attending to the cultivation of music—should be enabled, as much as possible, to sing also *out of church by himself*, the sacred music which he sings in church. It might perhaps be a means of contributing to his edification, especially as it also facilitates the remembrance of sacred and moral words. Many will have experienced that, through the help of impressive music, the words, which otherwise would have been easily forgotten, have been vividly retained in their memory. Ancient nations were so much convinced of this power in music, that they had their religious and moral laws in verse and song.

It is also by no means a matter of small importance that congregational singing in unison facilitates a closer union between different congregations. The stranger may join without any particular difficulty. There is nothing to bewilder

him—nothing to prevent his feeling himself as at his own church at home.

Now, supposing every churchgoer had practised part-singing in school, as is proposed by the advocates for harmony. But few, comparatively, are so situated that they can continue practising together with others. There is but little enjoyment or interest in singing *alone* the part of a harmony; consequently, the greater number would soon have forgotten it. But, even if it were possible for them to keep it up, it is also doubtful whether they could make use of it in church: partly because the same melody is not always found harmonized alike, and partly because the voice of boys undergoes afterwards such a change, that the part of a harmony which they learnt in school is useless to them as men. And it must necessarily happen, also, that people will sometimes meet with music in church, which they have never learnt to sing. The melody of this they might soon catch and join in; but a part of the harmony they certainly could not undertake without causing annoyance and confusion. Therefore, if congregational singing were in harmony, the majority of the people would be obliged to keep silent, in order not to spoil that which a few of them might perhaps succeed in doing tolerably well.

But it is needless to pursue this subject any further; enough has been said to show that singing in unison, with organ accompaniment in harmony, is not only the most desirable, but that it is also the *only* mode which, under present circumstances, can be successfully adopted.

This is also the opinion of the best German writers on congregational singing: men who have treated the question with a clearness and impartiality which is seldom found in English authors on this subject. This may be seen by comparing the English works on church music—of which the most important of those which are out of print may be

found in the Library of the British Museum—with some of the best by German authors; as, for instance, those by Häuser, Anthes, &c.

It may be objected with some show of reason that, as those German books are intended for the improvement of the music in the Protestant service of the Continent, the suggestions thrown out in them may, possibly, not be applicable to the service of the Church of England. It is, however, not difficult to show, that just the circumstance of the same opinions being held by those German writers gives an additional weight to the conclusions to which we have already come. It is universally acknowledged that the German nation is more musical than the English. In Germany, music forms an important part of education in almost all the schools. It is also well known that, in the Protestant churches in Germany, congregational singing is particularly simple, as it is almost entirely limited to the singing of metrical psalms. If, therefore, men free from prejudice and selfish motives, and at the same time thorough musicians, unanimously agree that singing in unison is the mode best fitted to the powers of a German congregation, how much more must this be the case in England, where, on the whole, the people are much less musical than in Germany, and where music much more complicated and diverse in kind, is employed for congregational use!

When the opponents of unison are driven to admit that it is the *easiest* mode for congregational use, they will sometimes insinuate doubts about its solemnity. That it is not devoid of this quality has, however, been sufficiently ascertained by a test more convincing than all arguments, viz., by practical experience. As a striking instance of this, the admirers of unison have often pointed out the solemn thrilling effect of the singing by the children of the charity schools at their

annual meeting in St. Paul's Cathedral. We are told of the deep impression it produced upon our best and most fastidious musicians. Haydn, especially, is mentioned as having been so overpowered by it, that he often afterwards referred to it with expressions of the highest admiration.

It must, however, be remembered, that this instance is not well chosen as a proof of the solemnity of unison in congregational singing, which, it ought not to be forgotten, is in octaves, and therefore somewhat different from the singing of the children. Much more convincing illustrations might be adduced from the compositions of our great masters. Here we find most solemn and really sublime impression produced by unison in octaves. The most convincing proof may, however, be found in churches where this mode of singing has been carefully adopted, and where it is strictly adhered to.

It has been put forth as a particular advantage of singing in unison, that opportunity is thus given to the organist to modify the harmony in the accompaniment, in order to make the music more in accordance with the peculiar impression conveyed by the words of each verse of a hymn or metrical psalm. This might be all very well, if we could only be sure that no misuse would be made of it. But, under present circumstances, it is most likely that but very few organists would use this liberty discreetly. It is, therefore, safer and more desirable that, as a rule, they should keep strictly to their music-book. How this book ought to be constituted we shall afterwards find opportunity to ascertain.

Indispensable Conditions in Unison.—From what we have learnt we may infer that, if the beauties of unison are to be fully brought out, the following conditions are especially requisite :—

1. All the people must join. A unison of but few singers is generally less beautiful than that of a large number. It is

similar also with instrumental music. A passage played in unison by twenty or thirty violinists has a charm which is not attained if played by two or three. This is not from the greater loudness, since the beautiful effect is quite as attainable when the music is soft; but it is from the increased roundness and fulness of the tone.

Even a mere sound, or noise, may acquire a peculiar charm if it is produced by a number of instruments of the same kind, acted upon simultaneously. Hector Berlioz, in his treatise on *Instrumentation*, gives some lively illustrations of this. Among others he notices the peculiarly pleasant effect of the slight noise produced by the muskets of a great number of soldiers obeying the command to "Shoulder arms!" or "Ground arms!"

It may be, then, easily understood, that if a mere sound, produced by many, is capable of giving such an agreeable impression, how much more must this be the case where we have music instead of mere sound.

2. The male and female voices must be in proportion to each other, otherwise the one will predominate too much and overpower the other. It is especially when the female voices are too weak that the unison suffers, since it loses much of its freshness, energy, and elevating grandeur. In church, however, the right relation will generally subsist, if every singer will but do his duty properly.

3. The unison must be sung with precision, which means that every one must take care not to fall in too soon, or to come too late with his note.

4. Every one must keep strictly to singing the melody. Next to the melody, the bass part of the harmony in the organ accompaniment is the most easily distinguished, being the lowest part, and therefore less hidden than the tenor or alto, which are in the middle. This easily induces some

persons who have a bass voice, to endeavour to sing the bass of the organ accompaniment instead of the melody. Nothing can be more annoying than the incessant pitching and trying here and there which is generally the result. But, even where it is done correctly, it only weakens the unison, as we have shown already.

5. The organ accompaniment must be in *dispersed harmony*, which means that it must be just so as the harmony would be if it were sung by the four voices—treble, alto, tenor, and bass. This is at present not so much attended to as it ought to be. It is very usual to play the tenor part of the harmony an octave higher than it should be. It is thus put between the treble and the alto, which enables the organist to play three parts of the harmony with the right hand, and the bass part alone with the left. This is called *condensed harmony*. It is true, he may thus give the bass part in octaves, which he otherwise could not do with his left hand alone, but only with the help of the pedals. But *dispersed* harmony is so superior in richness and solemnity that its non-employment must always be deplored. It is not, however, to be supposed that *dispersed* harmony ought to be exclusively used. The melodious flow of the different parts is sometimes better ensured by the interspersion of some *condensed* harmony; but *dispersed* harmony should always predominate.

Probably the reader will already have become convinced of the fallacy of the opinion, expressed by some persons, that unison must appear uninteresting to the musical members of the congregation, as it would not give them opportunity to employ their talents. Indeed, it is evident that though there is no opportunity offered for the display of individual acquirements, yet every member will find ample occasion to exert to the honour of God those gifts which a beneficent Providence has bestowed upon him. It may be that such a plain and

unassuming mode of singing will not be quite to the taste of those who have accustomed themselves to the corrupted harmony now so usual in church; but this shows even more strongly how imperative is the necessity for a return to that purity and sublime simplicity with which everything ought to be stamped which we offer before the throne of God.

Congregational Singing without Organ Accompaniment.—Vocal music without instrumental accompaniment is, under certain circumstances, particularly fitted to create a deep and elevating impression. The reason is easily explained. The human voice is superior in sound and in modification of expression to any musical instrument. Those instruments are justly considered the most impressive and beautiful which most nearly resemble the human voice. Vocal music without instrumental accompaniment requires, however, unusually careful execution, since the slightest mistakes are easily perceptible and annoying. It is therefore, on the whole, unfit for congregational use. Those who have had opportunity to witness the musical attempts of the people in churches where they have no organ, and to listen to the painful efforts of the leader, struggling unsuccessfully to keep the sinking voices in the right pitch, must be convinced that an instrumental accompaniment is quite necessary.

No instrument is so well suited for this purpose as the organ. Not only is its tone particularly solemn and sublime, but it has also many advantages over other instruments besides. It has a remarkable completeness and fulness. By means of its *stops* a number of other instruments are represented. Not only most instruments employed in the *orchestra*—or that combination of musical instruments which is required for the performance of symphonies, overtures, &c.—but several others, not otherwise in use, may be found in an

organ. And, notwithstanding the great number of stops in a large organ, one player is sufficient to make them all sound together, and to employ them at his discretion.

These few hints will be sufficient to show at once the great advantage of an organ over any other instrument in church. Indeed, it is so obvious, that all who understand the proper object of instrumental music in divine worship agree about it.

In congregations where the acquisition of an organ is out of the question, such instrument as bears the greatest resemblance to the organ—as, for instance, a harmonium or a seraphine—may, perhaps, be attainable, and would be certainly useful. A single hautboy, clarionet, violin, or other orchestral instrument, is little apt to contribute to the solemnity of congregational singing. To produce harmony on either of the two former is impossible, and on the violin and similar stringed instruments only possible to a limited extent. The tone of such a single instrument is also too thin for the size of a church. Besides, a full and steady bass, which contributes so much to the dignity of the music, is thus not attainable.

We should, however, judge too hastily if we assumed that congregational singing in unison, without instrumental accompaniment in harmony, must be devoid of solemnity and beauty. Indeed, experience has often shown that this is by no means the case. Neither should we be right to take as a rule, that in churches where they have no organ the singing of the people must be inferior to that of others. On the contrary, it is sometimes better, since the people are more compelled to exert themselves than in churches where the organ hides, and rectifies to some extent, the deficiencies of the singers. It is also possible that in congregations which do not possess an organ there may be a particular fervour and

delight in joining in the sacred songs, which is far more beautiful and successful than many suppose.

Congregational Singing with the Assistance of a Choir.—The choir is a body of practised singers appointed to represent or to support the congregation in the performance of the musical portion of the service. It is a favourite idea of some promoters of church music, that in churches where the cathedral service is only partially adopted, the choir ought, with its harmony, to support the unison of the congregation. They say that, if the people would sing only quite softly, the harmony of the choir would not suffer, and the effect would be fine. And there cannot be any doubt that this would be the case, provided the choir is efficient. If we do not distinctly hear the singing of the people, it cannot much affect the singing of the choir.

Others say that, as the unison of the whole congregation is naturally much louder than the harmony of a few singers, the former will remain sufficiently predominant, so as not to make the whole appear as a harmony spoiled by the introduction of consecutive octaves; but it will remain a unison, made only fuller and richer by the subordinate harmony of the choir. Others, again, propose that two parts of a harmony might be added to the unison of the congregation, so as to come under the lowest octave of the unison. Thus a harmony in three parts is formed, in which the highest part is in octaves. In this way the harmony remains pure, as the unison in octaves is *above*, and not *between*, its parts.

These and some similar projects may be, under circumstances, not objectionable, perhaps even desirable. The musical powers, tastes, and prepossessions in congregations are sometimes so peculiar that special means for their exercise are necessary. It would lead us too far if we were to point out in detail what, under special circumstances, ought

to be done. To find out this must be the endeavour of those who have the management of the music. They ought to be careful to ascertain how far the congregation is qualified to adopt that mode of singing which we have seen is the best, and to attain which should therefore be the universal aim.

Kinds of Music suitable for Congregational Use.

It may be useful if we now bestow some special attention upon the different kinds of musical compositions which are most suitable for the use of the whole congregation. It is, of course, not necessary to explain here the construction and the rules for composing those pieces. However useful and interesting such information may be to the musician, especially to the organist, it is not requisite for the church-goer in general, nor would he understand it without previous musical knowledge. But certain observations and æsthetic rules, bearing upon the subject, he may easily digest and remember; and they may be exceedingly useful to him in his endeavour to attain a sound appreciation of the proper steps for the advancement of genuine church music.

If in the following pages the different kinds of compositions are not treated in the order in which they ought to be considered with respect to their importance in divine service, it is because our chief object at present is to ascertain more accurately which are, in respect of their *musical* character, the most important for congregational use.

Metrical Psalmody.—There is no rubrical direction in the Prayer-Book for the introduction of metrical psalms or

hymns; they, however, received admission into the Church soon after the Reformation, and were almost directly taken up by the people with a warmth and delight which showed how powerfully they appealed to the heart of every one, and how admirably they were fitted for uniting the voices of all—high and low, rich and poor.

In looking a little attentively through one or other of those innumerable collections of psalm and hymn tunes which have been published, and which are daily augmented, we cannot but be struck with the strange mixture of music of all kinds generally put together. The names with which the tunes usually are headed might, indeed, prepare us to expect some extraordinary variety, being derived from persons, countries, towns, and streets in all parts of the world—as, Portugal, Hebrew, Sicilian Mariner's Hymn, German Hymn, Russian Hymn, Uxbridge, Beethoven, Ariel, Park-street, Goswell-street, Bremen, New York, Protection, &c. And these are frequently interspersed with tunes made up from fragments of symphonies, sonatas, oratorios, operas, and other equally foreign sources. We must learn to discriminate which are the best, that we may be able to pick them out and discard the others.

The old Psalm Tune.—It is generally acknowledged that, though the art of music has made wonderful progress since the time of the Reformation; and though, especially since the middle of the last century, true master-works in secular music have been created; yet, in sacred music for congregational use, the sublime simplicity and deep piety with which those old psalm-tunes abound has seldom been attained afterwards. The reason may probably, to a great extent, be found in the greater religious inspiration with which the composers wrote in those stirring times. Many of them were active participators in the great work of the Reforma-

tion; they had a lively sense of the necessity for improvement in church music, and saw in it a powerful aid for the more universal dissemination of the doctrines of the Reformation.

England received the first psalm-tunes from the Protestant Church of the Continent. Several instances are recorded in the history of church music, of the great zeal with which they were sung by the multitude; on some extraordinary occasions, thousands of persons united in one grand and solemn unison.

Also in our days, people, even the most unmusical, generally feel the superiority of such a tune as the Old Hundredth, for instance, to the most elegant modern melody, for congregational singing. The more it must be deplored that only so very few of these old tunes have been retained. Of those contained in the interesting collection by Thomas Ravenscroft, published in the year 1621, only a small number is now to be found in use, and these have lost in the course of time much of their original character and beauty.

Some professed admirers of the old psalm-tune regard with contempt any new tune, on account of its being new. It is difficult to see how this can be justified. If the old tune is especially distinguished by gravity and dignity, there are modern tunes remarkable for melodious flow and freshness. Indeed, new music may, under some circumstances, exercise an extraordinary power, just for the charm of its novelty. Having ascertained the suitableness of the music for our purpose, it would be therefore only to our advantage if we made sometimes a special point of carrying out literally the words of the Royal Psalmist: "O sing unto the Lord a new song!"

Modern Hymn Tunes.—It can be by no means desirable, that all our sacred tunes should be of a particularly grave

character—still less that they should be gloomy. Christians do not see in Jehovah an austere and wrathful God, but they know Him to be the all-merciful Father of mankind. It follows that, in our holy songs, the tone of heartfelt happiness must prevail with which we address God as our Heavenly Father. But there is a vast difference between such pure emotions, and that unhealthy sentimentality, evinced in amorous and languishing melodies, which seems to be now the fashion of the day. This cannot be too strongly denounced, as it must unavoidably, though perhaps unconsciously to most of the people, tend to weaken and to corrupt those pure feelings, without which our worship cannot be what it ought to be.

We have already become acquainted with the objections against the so usual admission of *arranged* music. There are, however, musicians who maintain that, as our modern great composers have written comparatively little or nothing for the Church, it must be a good plan to pick out here and there from their excellent secular compositions a beautiful idea, and, by some curtailing or adding, or throwing out a few bars in the middle, or by giving it an entirely different harmony, or by altering its key, time, movement, &c., to make a sacred tune of it. But, however inexpressively beautiful as is the *andante* in Beethoven's sonata in A flat major (Op. 26),—or the theme of the *larghetto* in his symphony in D major,—or that of the *andante* in his symphony in C minor, torn out of its place and connection, it loses its chief beauty, without becoming appropriate for its new purpose.

Thus also with fragments from operas. No doubt, every one whose heart is in some degree susceptible for music, must be delighted with the charmingly persuasive airs of Zerlina in Mozart's opera of *Don Giovanni*: “Batti, batti bel Masetto,” and, “Vedrai carino”;—or with the touching duetto in

Mozart's opera of *Die Zauberflöte*: "The manly heart with love o'erflowing;"—or with the expressive *adagio* from Agatha's great scena in Weber's opera of *Der Freischütz*: "Softly sighs the voice of evening." Yet, in whatever shape they may appear, they cannot be considered but as altogether inadmissible into divine worship: not only because, by the arrangement which they require, their original beauty is sadly tampered with; but especially because they are entirely secular pieces, composed, and by their authors intended, as such.

Besides, the lively recollection of their effect in the opera-house or the concert-room, which they are apt to recall when heard in church, is by no means calculated to promote religious feelings, but can only lead to comparisons not at all favourable to them in their new situation.

However, not only the above-mentioned pieces have been actually used for hymn-tunes, but many others also, from similar sources, from Mozart down to Donizetti.

The Chant.—The chant is often represented as particularly suitable for congregational use. There are, however, difficulties in the way of its being done properly.

Chants are not in time, like metrical hymns; but the words are recited upon a certain note (*the reciting note*) as if they were read. Each syllable, therefore, has not a fixed duration, as in a hymn. It is, however, the circumstance of all the syllables having a fixed duration which facilitates the performance of music by a number of voices united; since it produces a symmetrical order which is often easily caught and impressed upon the memory, even by those who are not musical, and who sing only by ear.

It is sometimes said, that in order to chant well, scarcely anything is required but to *read* well. Supposing this to be the case, is it then really so easy to read well? In chanting, it is however not sufficient to understand exactly the meaning

of the words, to observe accent and punctuation, as well as the particular emphasis which certain words require: all of which, if too little attended to, will spoil the distinctness and expression, and if done too much, will lead to a sort of declaiming and appearance of affectation, highly improper. But, besides, the chanter has to take care not to deviate from the pitch of the reciting note, and to connect the following notes in an easy and natural manner. Though some of the many guides or instruction-books which have been published, are well calculated to lend a helping hand, yet a good deal of practice will generally be found necessary.

Some chants are double the length of others. These are called *double chants*, and the others are *single chants*.

It will be remembered that on the title-page of the Prayer-Book we find the psalms are "pointed as they are to be sung or said in churches," and that this refers to the colon by which each verse is divided in the middle. A *single chant* extends over one verse of a psalm, and consists therefore of two parts; while a *double chant* extends over two verses, and consists of four parts.

The *double chant*, which is comparatively of modern origin, consequently resembles two *single chants*. The succession of its chords is, however, different from what it is in two successive single chants.

The reason given for the so frequent employment of the *double chant* is, that a greater variety is produced. At a superficial view, this may seem so. But we shall convince ourselves presently that the *single chant*, if judiciously employed, is by no means monotonous, and has at the same time the advantage of better preserving the intimate connection and flow of the whole.

The selection of the chant, with regard to the words, requires greater care than is usually bestowed upon it. It

ought, obviously, not to be chosen so much with regard to the sentiment of the first sentences, as of the prevailing sentiment of the whole. Where, in the course of a psalm or canticle, an alteration in the expression of feelings occurs, it is not unusual to change suddenly to another chant. In most cases, however, it would be better to retain the same chant, and to modify its expression according to the sentiment of the words. A change from *major* into *minor*, or *vice versâ*, may in some instances be advisable.

Those who are musical, know that the chief difference between a major and minor key, consists in the *third* of the diatonic scale being in the latter, a small semitone lower than in the former. Those, who are not musical, may become soon acquainted with the peculiarity of the character which distinguishes the one from the other, if they have opportunity to hear the same scale played successively in major and minor, or perhaps the common chord struck in each key, the one after the other. They will hear at once, how much more plaintive the music appears, when transposed from major into minor.

Many examples might be adduced from the compositions of our great masters, in which beautiful effects are produced by employing a melody in each of these keys alternately. Mozart especially, has sometimes several successions of ideas thus transferred.

Many chants, however, lose considerably in beauty by such treatment, if they are not originally composed with a view of being used in either way. Where the alternate employment of the major and minor key is not practicable, there are various other means, equally simple and effective, by which a sufficient change may be obtained. Of these, the judicious use of harmony must be especially pointed out. Even a vigorous chant in an energetic major key may, by its means, be made to become mild and plaintive.

Indeed, such a change of harmony of the organ accompaniment in a chant in a major key, is often preferable to the employment of the minor key: partly, because the melody, which is sung by the congregation, thus remains entirely unaltered, which, by the adoption of the minor key, is seldom the case; and partly because an expression of sadness in the major key is often particularly impressive. It may be compared with the grief of a vigorous man, in whom we naturally expect cheerfulness, and which, therefore, very likely affects us more intensely than the lamentations of a person of sensitive temperament.

It is evident that a chant, which would only allow modifications for the expression of rejoicing and mourning, would be often insufficient. But, as these two expressions are opposed to each other, we may infer that a chant, which allows of being adapted to both, can also be made appropriate for the expression of emotions less diverse in nature.

It follows, then—and our church music might derive great advantage if this truth were more generally acted upon—that by very simple means sufficient variety is obtainable; and that such simple means, in most cases, are preferable, as they best maintain the dignity of the music, prevent discontinuity, and are least likely to occasion additional difficulties in the execution of the music.

Some fear might be expressed—not without reason—of the danger likely to arise through misapplication of such hints as the above. If the composers of chants would add those modifications, with some indications for the kind of emotion for which the one or the other was intended, any misuse could not easily occur.

If we take into account, besides, how much there may be done for a change of expression by the appropriate employment of the stops and of the *swell*—a contrivance by which

an increasing loudness (*crescendo*) or a decreasing loudness (*decrescendo*) can be produced—as well as, perhaps, by a slight alteration in the movement, it must become evident to every one, that the opinion that the single chant is deficient in variety, is totally unfounded.

It must also be said with respect to the psalms, that, on the whole, the single chant is the most suitable for them. We shall afterwards have an opportunity to learn that the proper mode for the performance of the psalms is the antiphonal; or, in other words, an alternate chanting by two choirs. And this is generally most properly done when one verse is sung at a time by each side to a single chant. In psalms where two successive verses are intimately connected, the double chant may be applied with propriety. Also to the *Gloria Patri* the application of a double chant must, for similar reasons, be considered not inappropriate.

It is related that the origin of the double chant was quite accidental. An organist of one of the cathedrals, in accompanying a chant, out of forgetfulness or carelessness, fell suddenly into another chant, which was at once taken up by the singers. The change thereby produced, pleased, and the new combination was adopted. If this really happened as it is told—and very likely it did—it is certainly a questionable recommendation for the double chant. A new form of musical composition of any merit is not accidentally discovered, like a new island; but it is the result of a necessity for it, deeply felt and clearly understood by the inspired composer.

Some double chants are much like a single chant repeated, especially those in which the third part is just like the first. Their greater resemblance to the single chant, is by many considered as an advantage, and certainly not without reason.

If it were true, as some people maintain, that the worse a thing has become the greater is the probability of its being improved, we might well indulge in hope that congregational chanting will soon experience great improvement. As it is at present, it generally gives an impression of hurry and confusion, more resembling the jumbled prologue of the workmen in Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream*, than the pious expressions of a worshipping Christian community.

At the time of the Reformation, the necessity of hearing the words distinctly, seems to have been more strongly felt by the people than at present. Bishop Burnet, in his *History of the Reformation*, relates, that "there were two things much complained of: the one was, that the priests read the prayers generally with the same sort of voice that they had used formerly in the Latin service, so that it was said the people did not understand it much better than they had done the Latin formerly. This I have seen represented in many letters; and it was very seriously laid before Cranmer and Martin Bucer." And Heylyn, in his *History of the Reformation*, quotes an *Injunction* of Queen Elizabeth, issued in the year 1559, in which she "willeth and commandeth that there be a modest and distinct song so used in all parts of the Common Prayers in the Church, that the same may be as plainly understood as if it were read without singing: and yet nevertheless, for the comforting of such that delight in music, it may be permitted that in the beginning or in the end of the Common Prayers, either at morning or evening, there may be sung a hymn, or such-like song, to the praise of Almighty God, in the best sort of melody and music that may be conveniently devised, having respect that the sentence of hymn may be understood and perceived."

It is really time that we should do away with the inexcusable mode of chanting in which the words are gabbled,

drawled, and misaccented, against all sound reason and good taste.

Short, impressive Melodies.—Characteristic and impressive melodies, of no great length, to which the words are not recited, but sung each strictly in time, are particularly suitable for congregational singing. The symmetrical order of the rhythm impresses itself, as has been already remarked, most easily upon the unmusical members, and facilitates the keeping together of the voices. Short responses sung to such melodies or airs are, therefore, so far as the music is concerned, exceedingly appropriate. This applies also to the music for the *Glory*, before the Gospel:—"Glory be to Thee, O Lord!" and to the words sung in some churches after the reading of the Gospel: "Thanks be to Thee, O Lord!"

In cases where melody and words have to be several times unchangedly repeated, the execution is facilitated, because both are more forcibly impressed upon the memory. The responses to the commandments are, therefore, excellently suited for congregational singing. They are, as will be remembered, literally repeated after each commandment, except that after the last, which requires a slight alteration in the music.

If, however, several different melodies succeed each other, though each be short, characteristic, and impressive—in such cases there is generally an impediment to a dignified singing of the people. Herein lies the reason also, why *canticles*, however melodious they may be, are seldom suitable. It is, therefore, more practical to have them sung to a chant.

An advantage which cannot be too highly appreciated, is the great variety in the music which can be employed in the English Church. The rituals for the Lutheran Church, as compiled at the time of the Reformation, gave similar

excellent opportunity for the application of various kinds of devotional music. As they fell, however, gradually into disuse, scarcely anything in music but the psalm-tune was retained. Since the beginning of the present century, moreover, the monotony, too often produced, began to be more and more felt and discussed; and this led, in many instances, to practical steps for its remedy.

In order to ensure the fullest benefit which can possibly be derived from the appropriate music which is at our command, two conditions are indispensable, viz., a discriminating regard must be paid to the requirements of the individual congregation, and the unity of the Liturgy must be religiously preserved. These two conditions are so often lost sight of, that it will further our object if we spend a few moments in considering them separately.

A discriminating regard must be paid to the requirements of the individual congregation. The desire of having the music alike in all churches, and as much as possible in conformity with that in cathedrals, leads not unfrequently to the adoption of what, in individual cases, is entirely out of place.

That the musical capabilities of different congregations are not, and never will be, exactly equal, is so obvious, that it scarcely requires any notice. How can we reasonably expect to find the same efficiency in a small village church, as in one in a town where a great portion of a large congregation consists of the well-educated, many of whom have gone through a course of musical instruction?

Also the circumstance of having an organ or no organ in church, must influence the determining of the music. Not only is the organ-accompaniment a great assistance to inexperienced singers, but also many compositions, otherwise suitable, cannot properly be used without it.

Again, the degree of interest which a congregation takes in music, ought not to be disregarded. Even where the people delight in singing, they may easily have too much. One or other will discontinue singing for a time, to rest a little; then a fresh attack is made, and so on: consequently the whole is irregular and unequal.

Wherever in music the same idea is to be often repeated, a variety in expression is indispensable. In those congregations where this variety is not attainable, frequent repetitions should be especially avoided.

Also the numerical strength of a congregation ought to be taken into account in deciding upon the music. Some compositions, admirably suited for a small number of singers, lose much of their nicety when performed by a large number; others, again, can only be properly brought out by the participation of a great many singers.

Even the movement which the music demands, has some weight in the question. Large bodies do not move so easily as smaller ones.

It also sometimes happens that the same music, which can be executed by one congregation without pretension, will, for some reason or other, assume an undue importance, and become a means of exhibition by another, quite in contradiction with the purpose of church music.

How much the compilers of the Liturgy were convinced of the impossibility that all congregations could employ music in like manner and degree, the rubrical directions in the Prayer Book give ample proof. There we find continually the option given between reading and singing: "To be said or sung;"—"in quires and places where they sing, here followeth the anthem," &c. In carrying out the foregoing hints, we shall therefore only be acting more strictly in the spirit of the Prayer Book.

The unity of the Liturgy must be religiously preserved.—Every true work of art forms a complete whole, in which all the parts are nicely balanced, and have an intimate connection with each other. A discourse on a certain subject, in which the ideas are unconnected, is not likely to entertain and to enlighten the mind; and a confused musical composition, cannot forcibly appeal to the heart.

The Liturgy is also a work of art. It is not a confused arrangement, but a deliberate and careful compilation. It will have suggested itself to many, that the service commences with exhortation, after which follow confession, absolution, and prayers for grace to praise God befittingly; and after this comes praise. Hence we may already perceive, to some extent, the order and connection of its single parts, so as to form together a complete whole.

It is then of great importance that, in the admission of music, care should be taken to preserve this unity of the Liturgy, as otherwise it is not possible that the intended object of the service can be completely effected.

The unity of the Liturgy, however, suffers, when parts which are of minor importance, are, through the employment of music, made to become prominent, and to require greater attention than more important ones;—or, when music is only partially employed where it ought to be used either entirely, or not at all. It is therefore unjustifiable, when certain parts of the service are sung, while others of at least equal importance, are not; as, for instance, when the *Venite exultemus* ("O come, let us sing," &c.) is chanted, while the following psalms, to which the *Venite* forms the introduction, and invitation to sing, are read.

Also the long and unsuitable organ-preludes, sometimes longer than the following hymns themselves, must be noticed here. They are as inappropriate, as a preface longer than the

book. Likewise the practice of picking out from a metrical psalm or hymn, three, four, or five verses, almost totally unconnected, for the people to sing. Little does all this accord with the good advice of St. Paul, "Let all things be done decently and in order."

From these considerations we may safely conclude, that, if in every congregation, in deciding upon the music to be employed, the preservation of the unity of the Liturgy were strictly kept in view, there would be a great uniformity in the services of all churches, though the music might be different. But if, according to the scheme of certain professed promoters of church music, all congregations were to make it a special point to employ music exactly in the same manner and degree, the natural consequence would be, that, in many cases, the unity of the Liturgy could not be properly maintained; and thus the probability of a more universal uniformity in our public worship, would be considerably diminished.

On Organ Playing.

WE have seen already, how desirable it is for the churchgoer to be somewhat acquainted with that music, in the execution of which he has not to assist, since it also may prove a powerful auxiliary in preparing his heart for prayer, and rendering it more susceptible for the words of the minister. Besides, many a sincere churchgoer, at present, encourages musical performances which he, if he had more judgment on the subject, would be one of the first to disapprove.

In our endeavour to gain some useful information on organ-playing, we must first consider in what the duties of the organist consist. It will then appear, that, in order to be worthy of his vocation, he must possess the following qualifications.

He must be a religious man. To touch the hearts of others, the musician must himself be animated by those emotions which he intends to arouse. Where this is not the case, he cannot adequately accomplish his purpose.

There are organists, who, notwithstanding their musical efficiency, are really a hindrance to the edification of the people, because they themselves are devoid of those feelings which they have to awaken in others; they play, in fact, like a mere machine, without either soul or inspiration.

The organist is a servant of the church, and to be so conscientiously, and to be truly impressed with the sacredness of his office, he must necessarily be actuated by religious feelings and principles. Without pious emotions, indeed, no one can do his duty in church; least of all those who are appointed to assist in the celebration of its services. Therefore, an organist without a religious heart, is not a true organist, but a mere mercenary or hireling, and, indeed, unfit for his office.

He must be a skilful player. It is a matter of course, that a good organist has a certain dexterity in executing everything which is necessary, with facility and certainty.

This is, however, by no means sufficient. The treatment required by the organ is peculiar, and, indeed, very different from that of the pianoforte. It must be remembered, that a tone continues to sound in the same loudness, as long as the key is held down; while on the pianoforte it directly diminishes, and is soon entirely gone. And also, that the degree of loudness of the tone, does not at all depend upon the power of the touch, as is the case on the pianoforte. It is, however, especially the circumstance that a tone retains its full strength, during its whole duration, which renders an exact and smooth connection of the notes (*legato*) in organ-playing, particularly important.

Again, organ music is often written, like vocal music, in a certain number of parts, and these parts are often all of equal importance. The left hand of the organist requires, consequently, just the same development as the right hand. In pianoforte-playing, an equal development of both hands is certainly also very desirable; but the task assigned to the left hand is very frequently subordinate to that of the right hand.

It may be also that the organist is required to play with

each hand on a separate keyboard, while he has, at the same time, to execute an independent and important part with his feet, on the pedals. All of which is foreign to the pianist.

But, however obvious it is, that the touch, tone, and treatment of the organ have very little in common with the piano-forte, this is often lost sight of in the appointment of an organist, and he is thought fit for his place merely because he is a clever pianist.

He must be well acquainted with the character of the different stops. Whoever is somewhat acquainted with orchestral music, will be aware how much its effect depends upon the mode in which the instruments are employed. Not only have most instruments a certain colour of tone, which makes them peculiarly qualified for certain kinds of expression; as, for instance, the sound of the trumpet is martial, the horn reminds us of the forest and the pleasures of the chase, the clarionet may lead our imagination to the idyllic, the sound of the trombone is serious and dignified:—but also, by the combination of two or more instruments, new characteristic sounds are created; as, for instance, those produced by the union of clarionet and flute, or of bassoon and hautboy, in octaves.

And how different is the colour of tone in the higher and lower notes of some instruments! Compare, for instance, the highest notes of the clarionet with its middle notes, and its lowest notes.

It has probably also, not escaped the notice of the attentive observer, that the power of some instruments is essentially diminished by the addition of others; as, for instance, the power of stringed instruments may be softened by the addition of flutes.

The organ has a great similarity with the orchestra. It is,

as we have already seen, also a combination of several instruments, diverse in colour of tone, and in power. In organ music, however, composers seldom indicate minutely, and often not at all, the instruments—or, in other words, the *stops*—which are to be used. Such a proceeding would, indeed, often be useless: partly, because all organs have not the same number and the same kinds of stops; and partly, because the number and character of the stops to be employed, must, in divine worship, always depend upon individual circumstances; as, for instance, the size of the church, the power of the voices which are to be accompanied, the efficiency of the singers, the sentiment of the words, &c.

The organist must, therefore, be well acquainted, not only with the character of each single stop in his individual instrument, but also, with the effect of the combination of different stops. To him, indeed, the knowledge of the stops is almost the same as the knowledge of colour is to the painter.

He must possess theoretical knowledge. As the nature and the purpose of the organ are particularly favourable to the use of rich and solemn harmony, it is the more important that the organist should be well acquainted with the chords, and with the rules which ought to be observed in their combination. This, as well as theoretical knowledge in general, is also of great assistance to him in giving a more exact estimation of the value of a composition, and of appreciating its beauties and bringing them out more prominently. Besides, it enables him to avoid certain mistakes, which otherwise are easily committed, and to correct any oversights and misprints.

Indeed, without having studied the theory of music, the organist will sometimes be quite embarrassed in the fulfilment of his duties. Supposing, for instance, it is necessary

to have the organ accompaniment transposed into a different key from that in which it is written, even this might give him much trouble. Likewise would it be almost impossible for him to extemporize the shortest introductory or other piece required, without blunders.

He must have good taste and judgment. However great the theoretical knowledge and practical dexterity of the organist may be, they will be often of but little avail—indeed, may mislead him—if he does not possess also good taste, by which his judgment is governed.

Good taste and judgment are evinced in the choice of the music as well as in the execution. By their means, the organist will always be enabled to effect the most suitable and most beautiful combination of stops; judiciously changing them where it is required in the course of a piece. He will succeed in availing himself most properly of the advantages which may be gained by the use of the *swell* for the expression of the music. He will hit the proper medium, producing change without incongruity and disturbing contrasts; whereby his playing will be impressive without being pretentious or affected, and interesting in variety without derogating from the dignity of the music.

Even the art of being silent at the proper moment, and of relinquishing everything which is not in strict accordance with the main object of the music, requires a refined taste.

Nothing is so conducive to the cultivation of the taste, as an intimate acquaintance with our great master-works. The organist ought, therefore, to be conversant with our best music, secular as well as spiritual.

Also a liberal education has great influence in the cultivation of the taste in music. The acquisition of this must therefore be considered an important desideratum for the

organist, even if it were not on other accounts so very desirable.

Good taste and judgment, based upon thorough musical knowledge, are, in our day, more rarely to be met with in organists, than manual dexterity, though they are more important than the latter.

He must have some knowledge of the construction of the organ. In general, it is not too much to expect from a musician that he should have some knowledge of the construction of his instrument. For the organist this is, however, especially desirable. It will enable him to discover the cause of, and to remedy, slight defects, which are sometimes a great annoyance. An organ-builder is, in many places, not readily to be had, and would, in many instances, also not be needed.

It is especially desirable that the organist should be able to tune at least certain stops, often in use. He should be acquainted with the best means of keeping the organ in perfect condition. He should be able to give an estimate in case of a reparation being intended, or a new organ to be built. He should, under such circumstances, be qualified to be useful with his advice, and to be competent to judge whether every thing is done according to the contract.

Additional Accomplishments.—We have purposely noticed only the most necessary qualifications of the organist. It is obvious that there are several others besides, which might be of the greatest use to him, indeed, under certain circumstances, almost indispensable. Thus, if he is himself able to sing, he will, in case he has to assist the congregation with his advice and instruction in the art of singing, be much more useful than if he cannot illustrate his precepts by examples. If he possess talent for composition, his *prelude*, or other extempore piece, may be an original, beautiful, and

appropriate composition; while, by means of his theoretical knowledge alone, his attempt will probably be nothing but a dry and uninteresting calculation. Again, if he possess some knowledge of the history of church music, and is somewhat acquainted with the peculiar causes and circumstances which, in the course of time, have influenced the development of the art of music, he will have a more unbiassed judgment of it, in its present state. Thus he will be all the more deeply impressed with the necessity of preserving unimpaired what the experience of centuries has proved to be good, as well as of adopting such improvements as the spirit of our time, and the progress of the art of music, demand.

The Organ Accompaniment.—It appears easy enough to accompany a hymn or chant; yet, to do it *well*, needs more taste and judgment than is generally thought. Moreover, almost every one can perceive the great difference in the playing of the same accompaniment by an accomplished organist and by an inferior one.

As a general rule, the accompaniment ought to be subordinate to the singing. The superiority of the voice to any instrument, and the circumstance that vocal music, in which poetry is wedded to music, appeals in words and tones doubly powerfully to our heart, sufficiently account for this. The instrumental accompaniment has, so to say, to support the vocal music, and to show it to the greatest advantage.

In divine worship, the subordination of the instrumental accompaniment is doubly important, on account of the words, which have, of course, the first claim to our regard.

The degree, in which the accompaniment ought to be subordinate, depends upon different circumstances, with which the complete organist will know how to cope. Thus, if the congregation are but slightly acquainted with the music which they are to sing, it will probably require a more leading and

louder accompaniment; while a well-prepared choir scarcely needs any accompaniment—indeed, may be better without it.

Even in cases where the accompaniment must take the lead, it ought not entirely to dominate; since, though in this way the defects of the singers may be more hidden, yet they will not be avoided; and another great defect will arise, viz., disproportion of the accompaniment to the voices.

It may be that many of the usual defects in the playing of the accompaniment originate only from a certain nonchalance of the organist. Moreover, the very fact that by more care they might be avoided, will sometimes make them much more annoying than the unavoidable blunders in singing of the unmusical members of the congregation.

Of such kind are generally the following:—Chords which have to be played well bound to each other (*legato*), are detached (*staccato*); which, on the organ, not unfrequently gives the impression of a loud and sudden shriek. To a single note is added a little ornamental note (*appoggiatura*), which produces, when the two notes are held a little together, as is often done, a particularly disagreeable dissonance. The notes of a chord which ought to be struck precisely together, are played one after the other (*arpeggio*). In the middle of a piece the stops are thoughtlessly drawn out or pushed in, just as suits the momentary whim of the organist. The *swell* is unwarrantably and continually reverted to, by which the so-called *see-sawing* is produced. The last verse of a hymn is always sure to be accompanied with louder stops than the preceding verses, regardlessly whether it be in accordance with the sentiment of the words or not. At the end of a psalm or hymn a certain hackneyed sulky conclusion (*coda*) is added, however little in accordance with the character of the whole piece, and with the nature of the service in general. The proper duration of the notes, and especially of the rests,

is sadly disregarded, and the movement is as irregular as the staggering walk of an intoxicated person.

What can be more unseemly than resorting to the employment of many noisy stops, so that the organ overpowers and drowns the voices of the singers! In such cases the latter will either yield at once to the greater power of the former, or there will arise a kind of strife for superiority, more resembling the cries of the heathen invoking Baal, than the pious effusions of a Christian assembly.

What can be more frivolous and absurd than those rapid scales and brilliant passages with which some organists think to improve the accompaniment! It is very likely that the performer may thus succeed in drawing the attention of the congregation to his performance, and to himself personally. It is also very likely that a simple accompaniment in dispersed harmony will not afford him any opportunity of exhibiting himself. But, the more the organist repudiates any display, the surer will he be of securing for himself the good opinion of all those to whom the maintenance of genuine church music is a matter of sincere concern.

Organ Performances.—Though the organ is chiefly intended to serve in the accompaniment of the voices, it does not follow that the selection and execution of such music as is for the organ alone, may be treated with indifference. The complete organist is quite aware how much depends upon a judicious choice also of this music; and he has, during divine service, several opportunities to evince in this respect his good taste.

A *voluntary* is generally played when the people enter the church, and another when they leave. Also before the first lesson a voluntary is sometimes introduced. Besides this, he may have to play a *prelude*, or introduction to a psalm or hymn; some *interludes*, or short sentences between the single

verses or the lines; and a *postlude*, or short concluding sentence.

All these pieces are, unfortunately, too often mere extempore effusions of the performer—unprepared ramblings, without either form or meaning; or they are inferior and unsuitable pieces, chosen without sufficient regard to what is actually wanted.

It is well known that the extempore performances of Bach, Handel, and some other great organ-players, were masterly in every respect. Their improvised preludes, for instance, admirably fitted for their purpose, were cleverly founded upon the melody of that vocal piece for which they were to prepare; or, at least, there always subsisted the closest connection between the prelude and the vocal piece to which it was intended to serve as an introduction. That which is admirably accomplished by a few distinguished masters is, however, seldom successfully followed by the generality of artists.

Should the organist be in want of suitable music, instead of having recourse to a fantasia of his own, he would, in many cases, do better to omit his performance altogether. As the introduction to a metrical song he might restrict himself to playing simply the tune, without any alterations or additions whatever. This is generally well suited to prepare the people for singing the tune, and is often more solemn than a prelude.

Interludes might, in many instances, be much better dispensed with. Indeed, they are rarely of such a kind as to heighten the edification. Where for certain reasons they cannot well be entirely omitted, they ought, at least, to be as short and unassuming as possible. Where they are left out, the short intervals of silence, thus occurring between the

verses, may considerably increase the elevating impression of the whole.

Concerning the *out-voluntary*, or *closing-voluntary*, it is told of some celebrated organists, that they extemporized it so admirably that the people stood in amazement, listening with the greatest delight, quite disinclined to leave the church. It must be admitted that many of our present organists understand better how to "play the people out." They seldom neglect here to draw out as many loud and piercing stops as they can lay hand on, and to play such music as the people might waltz out of church to as fast as possible. Indeed, it seems almost as if some organists had made it their special object to obliterate as much as they can with their closing-voluntary, those religious impressions which have during the service been awakened in the people.

It would lead only to unnecessary repetitions if we were to point out here the great disadvantages of employing *arranged* music in organ-playing. An organist, not unfrequently, chooses even a merely arranged accompaniment for his solo performance; as, for instance, the accompaniment of a chorus from an oratorio, arranged for the pianoforte, &c. This is too absurd to require any further comment.

On a former occasion we have intimated the great injury arising from the admission of a sickly-sentimental style of music. Such is, however, the kind which is at present often preferred by organists. They will entertain the people, in their solo performances, with languishing rhapsodies, displayed on a hautboy or flute solo;—indulging in all sorts of affectation and overstrained expression. It is not too much to affirm that such performances are just of the very stamp to lead the heart away from the pure and divine. Some churchgoers, however, are delighted with this sentimental nonsense, because it is in imitation of a certain class of secular music of

which they are fond; and because they like to be reminded in church of that which gives them pleasure out of it.

Again, the preference given by some organists to so-called learned music, as fugues and similar compositions, is also objectionable. It is true, many fugues are so exceedingly interesting and beautiful, and a diligent practising of them has such a good influence in equally developing the fingers, and upon the legato-playing, that it is most desirable, indeed necessary, for the organist to study and to play fugues. There are also fugues in which the theme is so original, melodious, and prominent, and in which the modulation is so unlaboured and clear, that they will, to some extent, be appreciated even by the unmusical. But, on the whole, compositions so complicated in construction appear to the unmusical almost like a confused mass of sound, and must therefore be considered out of place in church.

The number of such organists as are really impressed with the true aim and end of their vocation, and who would not commit any of the faults of negligence or ignorance which have been pointed out, is undoubtedly increasing; and much might the churchgoer contribute to augment the number, if he would give no encouragement to any of those malpractices.

It has been often a matter of complaint, that the salary of the organist is so small as to compel him to employ almost all his time in gaining a subsistence by other means, and that therefore he has little or no time left to dedicate to his improvement. Much as it is to be wished that a due remuneration for his services should be awarded him, it must be submitted that, even under present circumstances, a great deal might be achieved if he would employ the time which he can afford only in the most proper manner, instead of wasting it in acquiring those flippancies in which many delight, though nothing can be more unsuitable in church.

On Choir Singing.

By Choir Singing is understood the singing of a regularly trained chorus of singers, or a *Choir*. The word *Quire* was used in former times for Choir, and has been retained in the Prayer-Book.

In congregational singing, music in parts can, for reasons with which we have already become acquainted, very rarely, or perhaps never, be properly executed. Vocal music in harmony, if it is good, and if it is well performed, is however so beautiful, and so remarkably qualified to contribute to the solemnity of divine worship, that its employment in church must be considered as particularly desirable.

A good choir is, therefore, a great acquisition. Indeed, wherever it is intended to impart the greatest possible solemnity to the celebration of divine worship, the assistance of efficient singers is almost indispensable.

This was also felt by the Jews. In Holy Scripture we read of the great interest which King David and King Solomon evinced in the maintenance and improvement of appointed singers.

Since the Christian era, the first important efforts which are mentioned for securing skilful singers were made at the beginning of the fourth century. And it is known that, at

the end of the sixth century, Pope Gregory the Great instituted and endowed excellent singing schools for this purpose. It must, however, be remarked, that the choir singing in that remote time was not in harmony, but in unison. Singing in parts was not invented until several centuries afterwards—about one thousand years ago; and a long time elapsed after its invention before it became more generally adopted in church.

The great check which the employment of music in divine worship received in England, about the middle of the seventeenth century, at the riotous time of the civil wars, had an especially disadvantageous effect, for a long time after, upon the cultivation of choir-singing. Since, though at the restoration of King Charles II. much was done to restore the music to its former standing, this succeeded only partially, for want of experienced singers.

We see then that the employment of a choir in church has existed from time immemorial, and that its usefulness has been proved by the test of long experience.

Some Observations on Part Singing.—Vocal music in harmony may be of such a kind that a chief melody is given to one part—for instance, to the treble, or to the alto; or it may be so that there is no chief melody in any of its parts, but that all the parts have an equal share of importance.

With respect to the words, vocal music may be composed so that each syllable has only one note—as we find it generally in a metrical psalm, a chant, &c.;—or it may be composed so that two or more notes are to be sung to a syllable, as we find it in fugues, &c., and which is called *figurate music*.

In cases where there is a chief melody assigned to one part of the harmony, this part is generally the treble. The treble being the highest voice, it is the most prominent.

And it is important that the chief melody should be easily distinguished; otherwise the music will appear confused, like certain kinds of calligraphy, where it is difficult to distinguish the letters from the surrounding ornaments.

If the chief melody occurs in another part of the harmony instead, and if it is so prominent as not to be hidden by the voices above or below, it may be thus exceedingly beautiful. In former times it was, indeed, usual in church music to assign the chief melody (*plain-song*, or *cantus firmus*) to the tenor; and as great care was often bestowed on the proper execution of the music, the effect must have been very impressive indeed.

Choir-singing, to answer its purpose fully in church, must, above all things, be correct and pure, in execution as well as in harmony. The choir must not consist merely of female voices (or the voices of children), nor merely of male voices; but both must be united. The different parts must be in proper relation to each other. In the music which is at present generally used, the treble requires the greater number of voices. After the treble, the bass should have the most singers. The alto and the tenor may be somewhat weaker, and may have their number of singers alike.

The power of the voices collectively must also be taken into consideration. It must depend upon the size of the church, as well as upon the character of the composition which is to be sung. The way in which the singers are placed requires not less attention, because on this too the impression of the music is, to a great extent, dependent.

It is evident that in choir-singing each singer has to modify his voice in accordance with others. It is, however, not unfrequently the case, that a singer is admired on account of the predominance of his voice. Perhaps he is even praised if he overpowers his fellows. But if he be a true artist, who

means it honestly with his art, he will feel but little flattered with such praise, and will endeavour to avoid the fault in future.

It must also be noticed that choir-singing in harmony does not need to consist throughout in a certain fixed number of parts. It may, perhaps, begin with a movement in five-part harmony; after this may follow a movement in three-part harmony, or in four-part harmony, and so on. There may be, also, pieces interspersed which are for a single voice (*solos*), or for two, three, or more single voices united (*duetts*, *trios*, &c.). How far this latter kind of music is admissible into divine worship we shall afterwards have opportunity to inform ourselves a little nearer.

Some Explanations respecting Cathedral Music.—By cathedral service, or choral service, is understood the celebration of divine worship as it exists in the *cathedral*, or the church in which the bishop of the diocese has his seat (hence the word *cathedra*, or *throne*). This is also frequently adopted, partially or wholly, in other churches.

Perhaps our purpose will be best furthered if we submit here the explanation of the employment of music in cathedral service, as it is given in *The Choral Service of the United Church of England and Ireland*, by the Rev. John Jebb. Having mentioned that the principal feature of the choral service is the chant, which, though admitting of great variations, forms the basis of the whole performance, he points out the following as the most essential parts of the choral song:—

1. "The chanting by the minister of the sentences, exhortations, prayers, and collects throughout the Liturgy, in a monotone, slightly varied by occasional modulations.
2. The alternate chant of the versicles and responses by the minister and the choir.

3. The alternate chant, by the two divisions of the choir, of the daily psalms, and of such as occur in the various offices of the Church.
4. The singing of all the canticles and hymns, in the morning and evening service, either to an alternated chant, or to a more intricate style of song, resembling anthems in their construction, and which are technically styled 'Services.'
5. The singing of the anthem after the third collect, both in morning and evening prayer.
6. The alternate chanting of the Litany by the minister and choir.
7. The singing of the responses after the Commandments in the Communion office.
8. The singing of the Nicene Creed, the Sanctus, and Gloria in Excelsis, in the Communion service, anthem-wise.
9. The chanting or singing of those parts in the occasional offices which are rubrically permitted to be sung."

The antiphonal or alternate singing of two choirs is so characteristic in cathedral music, that we must not omit to direct our attention here for a few moments especially to it.

The choirs are stationed on each side of the chancel. One choir chants or sings a verse or two of a psalm or hymn; then the other choir takes it up, while the former keeps silent; and so on in regular order.

On some occasions, however, both unite; as, for instance, in the *Gloria Patri* at the end of a psalm, or between the divisions of a psalm (as in the 119th Psalm).

This form of executing the music seems to have prevailed in the Christian Church from the earliest times. In the scanty accounts which exist of the manner of worship practised by the first Christians, it is mentioned that they used to

sing in turn, having formed themselves for this purpose into two divisions.

Little as is known of the real nature of the Hebrew music, there cannot be any doubt—and the supposition is strongly corroborated by the construction of several of the psalms—that the alternate singing of choirs was also practised by the Jews in the Temple. Indeed, it is not improbable that the primitive Christians may have derived this form of singing chiefly from the Jews.

It is interesting to observe that, even so far back as about 1500 years before Christ, the Jews seem to have had a somewhat similar mode of singing praises to God, as may be inferred from the account given of Miriam and the women, when, with timbrels in their hands, they went out to praise God for deliverance from the enemy.—Exod. xv. 20.

The word *anthem* is supposed to be a corruption of *antiphony*. However, only the so-called Full Anthem is sung by the two sides of the choir antiphonally. It is otherwise with the Verse Anthem, in which solos, duetts, &c., occur.

On the Admission of Figurate Music.—However beautiful figurate vocal music may be, in devotional service it ought to be employed only with great restriction, since otherwise the necessary simplicity of the music, as well as the distinct hearing of the words, will be impeded. This opinion has been held by reflecting minds in all ages. It is known that Gregory the Great took means to simplify the Ambrosian chants, which in the course of two centuries had become too florid. Again, at the Council of Trent, in the year 1562, the then so apparent misuse of figurate music in church was strongly denounced; and the banishment of all such music from the Roman Catholic service would probably then have been determined upon, had not Palestrina shown by his

sublime mass, called *Missa Papæ Marcelli*, that this kind of treatment of the voices is not necessarily incompatible with the simplicity and gravity of the music, and with the distinctness of the words.

Also in the Church of England there were raised, about the same time, many reasonable complaints against figurate music, called *curious singing* by those who objected to it.

Nothing is more usual on such occasions than for indiscriminating people to go too far, and to be ready to banish the good with the bad, as was the case with the Puritans. However, according to Burney's *History of Music* (vol. iii. p. 26), "the fears of those who wished well to our cathedral service were abated on finding that the thirty-two commissioners had not wholly condemned church music, but confined their censures to that species of singing which was productive of confusion, and that rendered unintelligible those parts of the service which required the greatest reverence and attention."

In some places in his *History of Music*, Burney submits suggestions for avoiding, or at least for mitigating, such defects. Thus, for instance (vol. iii. p. 148):—"Indeed, I see no other method of accomplishing this end in choruses than by *simple counterpoint* of note against note, in all the parts, at least the first time the words are uttered." And again, (p. 149):—"When the verse of a psalm or hymn is set in fugue, if the part that leads off the subject were to pronounce the whole verse or sentence, to complete the sense before the answer is introduced, it would, perhaps, obviate the objection that is made to this ingenious species of composition, on account of the confusion occasioned by the several parts singing different words at the same time."

Moreover, concerning the fugue, it is, indeed, difficult to see on what grounds its admission can be justified. If it be, as we have seen, generally out of place in instrumental music

in church, it must be much more so in vocal music, on account of the unavoidable entanglement of the words.

Such kind of figurate music, at present not unfrequently to be met with, in which a certain group of notes, to be sung on one syllable, is repeated over and over again, sometimes in ascending the scale, sometimes in descending, and so on, must be considered as especially unsuitable. If by such unmeaning repetitions the hearer is reminded of anything, it is perhaps of the mountebank, who contrives to draw out of his mouth an almost endless quantity of riband.

Choir Singing with Instrumental Accompaniment.—On no question concerning church music, perhaps, has there been expressed a greater diversity of opinion than on the employment of instrumental music.

Some contend against it on the authority of St. Paul, 1 Cor. xiv. Others will point out how exceedingly solemn is some of the old choral music for voices alone; and they maintain that musical instruments were not employed in the primitive Christian Church, and ought, therefore, not to be employed by us.

Others will express a doubt of the primitive Christians never having used instrumental music; or they intimate that, if the primitive Christians did not use it, this was less from choice than from necessity dictated by peculiar circumstances, since the persecutions to which the Christians were subjected must have compelled them to celebrate divine worship with as little ostentation and noise as possible.

Much stress is laid by some advocates for instrumental music upon the circumstance that it was amply used by the Jews, and that its employment became also usual among the Christians about the middle of the fourth century, soon after Constantine the Great had embraced the Christian religion,

and when the cause which formerly prevented the adoption of instrumental music was consequently removed.

Others have even endeavoured to prove from Holy Scripture—as, for instance, from Rev. xiv. 2, and Isaiah vi. 3—that the singing of the angels in heaven is with instrumental accompaniment, as well as in the antiphonal form, and that therefore our devotional music ought to be similar.

Again, those who agree upon the admission of instrumental music, differ in opinion respecting its mode of employment. Some maintain that the instruments ought to have exactly the same notes as the voices. That it was so in the Jewish Temple they infer from passages like this:—

“It came to pass, as the trumpeters and singers were *as one*, to make *one sound* to be heard in praising and thanking the Lord,” &c.—2 Chron. v. 13.

There is much reason (they say) to suppose the music, as well as the poetry and architecture, of that period, to have been of divine inspiration; and we ought, therefore, to conform to it as far as is in our power.

Others—and they are a great number—hold the opinion that no other instrument except the organ ought ever to be made use of.

Instead of enlarging upon questions which, after all, involve a mere matter of individual opinion, it will be more practical if we endeavour to inform ourselves—supposing instrumental music is to be admitted in church—how it ought to be constituted in order to answer best its true purpose.

The great advantages which the organ possesses over any other single instrument are generally acknowledged; nevertheless, it must be admitted that it has also certain imperfections. The principal of these consist in its inefficiency to admit, in the course of a performance, of different expres-

sions being given to a tone or chord with sufficient nicety. On most other instruments this is entirely different. What a variety of peculiar accentuations may not be produced on a violin, or a similar stringed instrument, by a different manner of bowing! Even the pianoforte, though in this respect less complete, allows of a great diversity of expression of a tone, according to the greater or less elasticity and force of the touch. On the organ, any marking out of single notes is almost impossible.

Divers means have been resorted to, to meet this deficiency, but none has proved quite successful. The swell—so usual in English organs—is but a very incomplete substitute for what is wanted, since it unavoidably effects a like change in loudness in all the notes which are played together on that keyboard to which it is applied.

It is true, there are not a few persons who think this want of exactness in expression unimportant. Some even maintain that the solemnity of the music would be impaired if the organ were, in this respect, more complete. But, surely, a little reflection would convince any unprejudiced mind, that the most complete means for giving due expression to our music in church must be also a powerful auxiliary for increasing its solemnity. This may also be witnessed in choir-singing. How much, here, is the solemnity enhanced by the nicety with which the singers observe the different shades of expression!

The most complete combination of musical instruments is the orchestra. The organ, besides being less complete with respect to expression, has not the same variety, in colour of sound, as can be produced by the different orchestral instruments. However, the difficulty of procuring a good orchestra, as well as the trouble and excitement usually connected with the performance, would, in many instances, tend rather to

prevent, than to minister to, the edification of the worshippers, and may, therefore, be a sufficient reason for its non-employment.

In case an orchestra is employed, such instruments as are by their nature opposed to the expression of devotional feelings ought, of course, to be carefully excluded. This applies especially to instruments in which a martial character is particularly predominant. Religion is for peace and reconciliation, and reminiscences of the tumult and strife of war are out of place in the house of prayer.

The only instance in which, at present, in the Church of England, the orchestra is used, is when a *Te Deum* is performed on extraordinary occasions of rejoicing, as at the celebration of thanksgiving for peace, &c. In the Roman Catholic Church it is more often employed.

In church music with orchestral accompaniment, composers seldom make use of the organ. The orchestra being complete in itself, the addition of the organ would be, in most cases, superfluous, and would easily impair the nicety and beauty of the instrumentation.

An addition of a few single orchestral instruments to the organ is, generally, not commendable, as the effect is rarely improved by it. In instances, however, where the organ has certain conspicuous imperfections, the assistance of one or more instruments may be desirable; thus, for instance, where the bass is too weak and indistinct.

However superior, under some circumstances, in choir-singing, an orchestral accompaniment may be, in congregational singing the organ will always have a decided preference. Congregational singing is, as we have seen, by its very nature, not distinguished by great artistical accuracy, but by a certain solemnity and grandeur, produced by the fervent participation of all the people. It is not difficult to

perceive that the organ is just the right instrument to assist in effecting this.

Some centuries ago, it was more usual than at present, to employ vocal music without instrumental accompaniment in church; and we possess, as is well known, beautiful compositions by ancient masters, written for voices alone.

The sublime beauty by which such music can be invested was, perhaps, never more powerfully evinced than at the coronation of the Emperor Napoleon I. On this occasion, the Parisians, anxious to ensure the highest possible excellence, conceived the extraordinary idea of employing eighty harps in the orchestra. The novel and splendid effect filled the hearers with admiration. But when, a little while after, the Pope entered the church, and his thirty singers, brought over with him from Rome, received him with the solemn "*Tu es Petrus*," by Scarlatti, then it was felt and admitted by the Parisians—though not quite without some feelings of mortification—how much more elevating this pure and unadorned vocal harmony was, than the brilliant display of their singing with the accompaniment of eighty harps.

There can be no doubt, it would greatly further the purpose of our devotional music if the organ were used more sparingly, and vocal music without accompaniment were more frequently introduced, than is done at present.

Choir Singing interspersed with Solos, Duets, &c.—It has been often a matter of dispute whether pieces for single voices are desirable in choral singing. Neither do the defenders of this kind of music agree with respect to the extent to which, and the occasion on which, it ought to be permitted.

As a justification for its admission is often advanced, that it ought to be our special endeavour to apply, in the celebration of divine worship, the best which art is capable of

attaining. It must, however, not be forgotten, that what is the best music in church, is not always that which is the best, merely musically considered, but rather that which best promotes the chief object of divine worship. And it is also not exactly true, that a chorus with interspersed solos, duetts, or similar pieces, is a more complete and higher work of art than a mere chorus.

It cannot be denied, because experience continually teaches it, that the introduction of music for single voices easily endangers the dignity of the whole. Individual performers, however, often prefer it to any other, because it gives them a better opportunity to exhibit their proficiencies. Moreover, this very fact is another strong argument for exercising much caution in its admission; since it is most judicious not to offer, in church, any unnecessary occasion for the gratification of the high self-complacency sometimes to be found in singers.

Should its admission, for some reason or other, be desirable, it will, as a general rule, be least objectionable in those performances which do not form a necessary part of devotional worship, but are only of secondary importance.

Though, at present, compositions for single voices are admitted by several Christian denominations in public worship, still, in no other Church do they occur to the same extent as in the Roman Catholic. The modern Masses possess, indeed, generally, but little of a sacred character. This reproach applies to many which are otherwise distinguished by great beauty and originality. That a secular spirit predominates in most of Haydn's and Mozart's Masses is now so universally felt by reflecting musical men, that one may speak it out without having to fear being declared a depreciator of these great masters. It is, however, also a known fact, that Haydn was himself well aware of his

inferiority in this style of composition, and that Mozart wrote most of his Masses, not so much from his own choice, but rather when he was pressed for money.

Some acquaintance with the earlier great masters—Palestrina, Orlando di Lasso, Tallis, &c.—must convince every one how much better they succeeded in expressing emotions of sincere devotion. However, as in former time sacred music exercised an influence upon secular music, so in modern time the Opera has affected the Church.

How the Churchgoer ought to participate.—Also, on the question whether it be desirable that in cathedral service the congregation should blend their voices with the choir-singing, various opinions have been expressed.

Some persons are decidedly against it, declaring it contrary to the choral usage of the Church. Others lay much stress upon the music being preserved as correct as possible, and think that the people can best participate with all fulness of heart by reverently listening to the singing of the choir. Others point out how much more interest people generally take in the service, when they can join with their lips as well as with their hearts; and they maintain that, by the union of all, the solemn impression of the whole is considerably heightened.

Others, again, propose a kind of middle-course, viz., that the people should join in singing, but in a quite subdued voice; indeed, rather softly whispering or murmuring than singing, in order that the beauty of the choir-singing might not be impaired by it.

It is, also, not unusual to meet with churchgoers who are of opinion that they really contribute to the beauty of the choral music by falling in with a full and unrestrained voice. Indeed, it seems to them an easy thing to sing well with others in chorus, though they know next to nothing of music.

They are under a similar self-delusion to certain cockney sportsmen, who fire off their gun with others, and imagine themselves to have brought down the game, while they have but made a noise.

This is certain: the purer and the more correct choir-singing is, the more it must suffer when unskilful and unprepared singers add their voices. And we have seen also, in a previous chapter, that the melody, when sung by the congregation, will sound in octaves, and how harsh and objectionable these octaves are, when introduced into the harmony of the choir. Besides, it destroys the due proportion of the different parts to each other, as it makes the melody too overpowering for the other parts of the harmony, which are executed by comparatively few voices. Therefore, even if it were possible for the people to catch the melody exactly, and to sing it quite correctly, it is evident that, *musically*, the whole must certainly suffer. And for the people to sing correctly in parts and from notes, just like the choir itself, this even the most sanguine will not, under present circumstances, imagine possible.

And it must also be remembered, that in some kinds of choral compositions there is no chief melody in the treble, or any other part; but the melody of each part is of equal importance. Who, with some feeling for purity in music, could think of advocating here the intrusion of any uncultivated and crude voices? If, however, people are so little musical as not to mind this, and if they feel their edification better promoted by joining with their voices, it may be, perhaps, only desirable that they should do so; since it is, after all, more important that they should be edified, than that the music should remain faultless.

It is sometimes said, in the cathedral we ought to have the finest music, in order that the people may have an oppor-

tunity to cultivate the taste for the highest kind of devotional music. However plausible this argument seems, it must not be forgotten that the church is not a school for cultivating the musical taste of the people. This ought to be especially aimed at out of church, as we shall afterwards endeavour to show.

Perhaps it would not be so very objectionable as some persons seem to think, if also in cathedral service some music especially intended and adapted for the singing of all the people collectively, did regularly occur. This would afford every one opportunity to express his feelings in an audible voice, without running the risk of damaging the more artistic performance of the choir. Those who denounce this project, do so principally on the plea that the unity of the cathedral service would suffer by it. They will, however, have some difficulty to prove the reasonableness of such an assumption, if the necessary caution is exercised in the selection of the music, and if the right moments are chosen for its admission into the service.

This is certain, in former times truly congregational songs have sometimes been permitted in cathedrals, not without great advantage. Even the unanimous singing of the people in the Minster of York, about two hundred years ago, as recorded in Mace's *Musick's Monument*, and from which the following is a short extract, confirms this, and shows vividly the great interest and fervour evinced by the people:—

“ But when that vast-concording unity of the whole congregational chorus came (as I may say) thundering in, even so, as it made the very ground shake under us (Oh, the unutterable ravishing soul's delight!); in the which I was so transported and wrapt up into high contemplation, that there was no room left in my whole man, viz., body and spirit, for anything below *divine* and *heavenly raptures*.”

A branch of the art of music, so extensive as that concerning choir-singing, to be treated somewhat circumstantially, would require much more space than can here be afforded to it. How much might be added on the different kinds of compositions employed in cathedral service ! The reason which compelled us to expatiate as briefly as possible upon congregational singing—and, in fact, upon all those questions which must naturally concern most deeply the great majority of churchgoers—doubly binds us here to avoid going more into detail than is imperatively necessary.

Means of further Improvement.

HITHERTO our chief endeavour has been to ascertain how much, under present circumstances, can be done for ensuring a more suitable style and performance of the music employed in our public worship. It remains now for us to inform ourselves of the most proper means for bringing the music to that higher state of perfection which it is not immediately possible to attain. For this purpose the following suggestions are submitted.

Music must be taught in Schools.—In no way can the improvement of church music in general, and especially of congregational singing, be more effectually attained, than by music forming part of the education in schools. In children is the love and talent for music easily awakened and developed, especially as in school a regular and unintermitted course of musical instruction is the most easily attainable.

Singing can scarcely be commenced at too early an age with children. Even before their school education begins, indeed, before they are able to speak, they will often delight in singing some little melody which they have caught one way or other. If they are encouraged in this, and little suitable tunes are sung to them, it will assist in cultivating their ear for music, long before they have learnt the notes.

In order to have the greatest possible influence upon the music in church, it is especially important that music should be taught in all schools, without exception; for the rich as well as for the poor, for boys as well as for girls. And it is likewise important that *all* the children of a school should participate in the music lessons. The assertion that this or that child has no voice or talent for music, is often premature and unfounded. It may continually be experienced how, with children, a certain bashfulness and timidity almost entirely stifles the voice, and thus gives the impression of want of voice and talent, until the natural shyness is overcome. And it ought also to be remembered that often, in the course of time, talents are developed in man, of which at the beginning no trace was perceptible.

The time which in schools can be spared, from so many other lessons, for musical instruction, is generally but short; it should therefore not be frittered away upon matters of lesser moment. It is, for instance, unnecessary that children should be directly troubled with the learning of many notes, clefs, major and minor keys, &c. The tunes, which they have to sing, are, if really suitable ones, in the compass of but few notes: consequently the knowledge of some few notes is sufficient to begin with.

Projects have now and then been advanced to render the learning of the notes in schools unnecessary. The method of letting the children sing from ciphers, instead of notes, is intended to facilitate the learning of music in general. However useful in some respects it may be, it has also several disadvantages, among which the chief is that it does not absolve the learner from the necessity of learning the notes if he wishes to progress. He has, therefore, in acquiring two methods of reading music, double trouble.

As a general rule, children ought to learn *in unison* that

music which they have to sing in church. In part-singing, only those few children to whom the chief melody (*cantus firmus*) is allotted, learn to sing the tune well; the others, who have to sing the second, third, or fourth part of the harmony, remain comparatively unacquainted with it. After they have left school, many of them are therefore unable to join their voices properly, even in the most commonly-used sacred songs.

Besides, part-singing requires more time for practising; and in the same time in which children will learn a three-part psalm tune, they may learn at least two tunes in unison. And if we consider the almost insurmountable hindrances for the attainment of a correct congregational singing in harmony, the preference for a good singing in unison by the children will become even more evident.

Particular care should be taken that the children should sing the melodies in church exactly as they have learnt them in school. If this is strictly adhered to, the music will be preserved genuine, and will be a safe guide to those members who have not had any opportunity to learn music. In order to sing properly in church, it is necessary for a child to be so far advanced as to be able to read tolerably well, and to pronounce English correctly. He must also be capable of understanding the meaning of what he sings. If these simple acquirements are not yet attained, the child's singing will, very possibly, prove annoying; or, at all events, it will be quite useless for the improvement of the whole.

Part-singing is not only very beautiful, but it is also very useful for cultivating the ear, and for promoting a truer appreciation of good music, since it makes us more familiar with the beauties of harmony. It is, therefore, exceedingly useful for children to be practised in part-singing also in

school, provided it does not interfere with the more necessary exercises of singing in unison.

This is not the place to enlarge upon how desirable, in many other respects, besides that of improving our devotional music, the universal admission of music in schools, as a part of education, would be. It must suffice here to point out how it would contribute to the promotion of the health and happiness of the children—what a delightful and innocent recreation it would afford between difficult and troublesome lessons—how it even heightens the interest in the participation in public worship, in young and old;—and how, altogether, social life is by it rendered more beautiful and noble.

Little *secular* songs, in which both melody and words are of such a nature that they find easy access to and sympathy in the child's heart, and which, by their simplicity and purity, are well fitted to exert an ennobling influence, are especially useful. For mere exercises in singing, they are generally preferable, because the sacred tunes, if also used for this purpose, may easily become hackneyed and tiresome.

Respecting the musical acquirements of the schoolmaster, it is important that he should be able to sing, and to play an instrument, even if it is but little. An instrument which permits him to sing, or to speak to his pupils while playing, and on which he can without any trouble give the notes always perfectly in tune, is the most suitable; and one on which a full harmony can be given, as, for instance, the pianoforte, is preferable to any other. He should have an easily-comprehensible and pleasant method of instructing the children, and should possess theoretical knowledge, and some acquaintance with good musical compositions.

What a delightful and soothing companion may music be to the schoolmaster in his vocation, which is sometimes as

irksome and irritating as it is useful and honourable! It is obvious that the beneficial influence of music upon the school-master would also be advantageous to the children, as it would naturally influence his temper, and would make the relation between him and his scholars closer and more agreeable.

People must have opportunity to practise together.—If no opportunity is offered to those who have left school, for further cultivating music, they will soon forget a great deal of it; especially the necessary mechanical ability is soon diminishing if it is not kept up by practice: it is, therefore, of great importance, for the maintenance of good congregational singing, that the congregation should have opportunity of practising together. The formation of parochial associations might be of excellent use for the promotion of this object.

However different, according to circumstances, such associations might be in different congregations, in all cases they ought to be so constituted that all the members, without exception, are able to participate.

Care must be taken to ensure a variety in the music practised. Without variety the music may soon become tiresome, especially to those who are not much acquainted with music, and who have no enthusiasm for the art.

It is similarly unpractical when too many preparatory exercises are demanded, which seem unnecessary and tedious to many of the members; or when they are induced to attack what they cannot successfully carry out, by which many are at once frightened from any attempt at all. Even the choice of time and place of meeting requires no little consideration, in order that it may conduce to the success of the undertaking.

No wonder that, where these matters are not attended to,

any such institution will, as soon as the charm of novelty is over, rapidly approach its dissolution.

Though the congregation ought, as a general rule, to sing in unison, yet, where several favourable circumstances conspire, part-singing is not altogether impossible. Supposing a nation to be gifted with particular talent and love for music, and the people to be pious and zealous; supposing that extraordinary attention and diligence were given to musical instruction in all the schools, that the clergy took a deep interest in the improvement of congregational singing, and that able and earnest professional musicians were at hand to advise and assist the people in singing correctly from notes;—where so many favourable circumstances concur, congregational singing in four-part harmony is attainable, as experience in some few rare instances has proved.

Besides the regular meeting for practising, intended for the exercise of all, it might be useful if there were another for practising part-singing. It is a matter of course that only those ought to be admitted here, who are sufficiently advanced to be of use. Thus would be formed a chorus of singers which would, by uniting with the choir, render it more powerful and more beautiful; or which perhaps might make the employment of hired singers altogether unnecessary. If this were judiciously managed, other members would probably be incited to qualify themselves to take part in it; and thus the choir would gradually increase in richness and beauty.

In Germany, where music is taught universally in schools, and where it is therefore an indispensable condition for a schoolmaster that he be musical, there exist also vocal societies of schoolmasters. These societies often contribute as much to the improvement of the music in church, as to the diffusion of musical knowledge in general. They are there-

fore, in some provinces of that country, especially encouraged and patronised by government.

Care must be taken to appoint competent Musical Officials.—Considering how much the improvement of our church music depends upon the efficiency of those musicians who are especially appointed to foster it, it is evident that the greatest care ought always to be bestowed in the selection of these men.

A great deal can be done by a good organist. Unfortunately, there are yet many churches without an organ. This instrument is, as we have seen, so great an assistance in congregational singing, that every congregation ought earnestly to aim at the possession of one, however small it may be.

Never ought an organist to be appointed for any other reason than that he is well qualified for the performance of his duties. However kind and charitable it may be to select a man because he is afflicted with blindness, or a lady because she is a widow, and has to support a large family;—the chief object for which the organist is engaged cannot be a secondary question.

Nothing would tend more to ensure the increase of the number of efficient organists, than the formation of some well-conducted institutions for their training, in which their competence should be ascertained by an examination, before appointing them to a place.

Even in cases where it is not possible to have a choice, care might at least be taken that the organist should never lose sight of the true object of his vocation, and that he should avoid any such faults of carelessness or inattention, as have been pointed out in our reflections on organ-playing.

Of like importance is it that only such choir-singers should be appointed whose musical efficiency and earnest zeal have

been sufficiently proved. And as "the workman is worthy of his hire," so ought they to be remunerated, at least so as not to be driven to neglect the cultivation of sacred music, and to occupy themselves, for the sake of their maintenance, almost exclusively with some class of secular music, often by no means of a noble stamp. Can it be wondered at that there is often an apparent want of energy and fervour, when so little encouragement is given, and merit is so little rewarded?

In congregational singing, the assistance of a good leader is especially advantageous. Much might be attained for the improvement of the whole, if only such persons were chosen for the office of parish clerks, as are able to lead the singing properly. In former times this was always the case, and the office of clerk was performed by a clergyman. Those who are not aware of this, may find further information on the subject in Dr. Hook's *Church Dictionary*.

The Clergy must be acquainted with Music.—If it behoves every churchman to assist in the cultivation of church music, it must be regarded a special duty for those who, from their standing and influence, are able to do more for its advancement than others. And how is it possible that the clergyman can sincerely exhort the congregation to do their duty in the performance of the music, if he himself neglects what cannot but be considered a part of his duty?

Besides this, there are several other important reasons why some musical knowledge is to him most useful, nay, really necessary.

By no other means can he so well prepare a fertile ground for his words than by himself contributing to promote the cultivation of solemn and impressive devotional music. He ought, therefore, to be capable of judging whether the music employed answers its purpose adequately, and whether the

execution is in accordance with its spirit. He ought to know so much of music as to have some idea of the cause when the music is unsatisfactory.

Instances occur continually where a clergyman, who is sincerely concerned about the improvement of the music in his church, will resort to means which, in his case, are entirely useless, or even calculated to increase the evil. For instance, if the congregation are asked for contributions of money, in order to effect an increase of the choir, or to procure some additional stops for the organ, in cases where not a greater quantity but a better quality of sound is required.

Also the circumstance that the choice and the superintendence of the organist and the choir generally devolve upon the clergyman, is a strong argument for the necessity of his being acquainted with music.

In Dr. Pinnock's *Laws and Usages of the Church and the Clergy*, we read, under the head, *The Control over the Organist, the Singers, and the Singing*,—"the control over the organ and over the singers, &c., is legally vested in the officiating minister." And, after quoting some decisions in the Ecclesiastical Courts, he proceeds: "From the above opinions, it is evident that the singing, chanting, and the introduction of instrumental music into any part of divine service, are entirely dependent upon the discretion of the minister, who is, however, restrained from indulging any unbecoming fancies or peculiarities, which might prove offensive to the religious feelings of the congregation, by their power of appeal to the ordinary," &c.

As it is, however, impossible properly to control others in matters in which one is himself totally ignorant, so it cannot be surprising if now and then some absurd mistakes are made.

It is especially necessary that the clergyman should be able

to sing. Many an intelligent churchgoer will have been struck with the unmeaning inconsistency in some churches, where the adoption of the cathedral service is aimed at, but where the minister, for want of the necessary ability to sing, is compelled to read his part, while the responses, or people's part, are sung.

Even in cases where the clergyman is, by ill health or other causes, prevented from singing, if he has in former days been able to do so, it will always be of great use to him, as it will enable him to contribute, by his experience and good advice, to the attainment of a greater perfection in the singing of the people and the choir.

Every one knows how much good reading and speaking depend upon a clear and flexible voice. In church, nothing more impedes the impressiveness and solemnity of the words of the minister, than their being pronounced in a mumbling tone of voice. Now, it is a well-known fact, that no means is so effectual for strengthening the voice, rendering it flexible and agreeable, and giving a full command over it, as the cultivation of singing. How important therefore is it for the clergyman also in this respect!

The surest way of attaining this desirable object would certainly be, that the necessary musical knowledge should be required at the examination of the candidate for Holy Orders. From what has been submitted, it is not difficult to convince ourselves that the advantage gained would be exceedingly great.

It is impossible to believe that the great majority of the clergy should not feel the disadvantage of being ignorant of that which forms such a considerable and important part of public worship. It is also well known that many sincerely regret not having had any opportunity of learning music; and several distinguished divines might be named, who have

urgently recommended the study of it to their clerical brethren. Luther, for instance, says:—

“I want to see the arts, especially that of music, in the service of Him who has given and created it.”—“Next unto theology, I give the place and highest honour unto music.”—“Young men ought not to be ordained into Holy Orders until they are well exercised in school-knowledge and in singing.”

Neither must it be entirely overlooked what a beautiful occupation the cultivation of music is for the clergyman, especially if he lives in the country, and has but little opportunity of mixing with men of cultivated mind. What can be more conducive to the comfort and happiness of his home, and better calculated to strengthen the intimate tie between the pastor and his flock?

There must be some authorized Collections of Church Music. It would greatly tend to ensure suitable music, if there were some collections of carefully selected compositions, sanctioned and recommended by authority. These ought to be so constituted that every congregation might find its wants supplied.

The utility of any collection might be enhanced by some hints with each composition, specifying what character of Service it would most properly serve, or in which particular season of the year it ought to be used. Such simple suggestions might do a great deal towards preventing errors of taste, at present so usual; and it would not so often occur that music, which, from its character, is best suited for peculiarly solemn occasions, would be employed on a common Sunday; or that such as would be in the right place during Lent, would be selected for a great festival; and similar misapplications.

The Anglican Church is so fortunate as to possess compositions of a truly spiritual character for her cathedral service,

of which several, written about the time of the Reformation, by Tallis, Bird, Gibbons, and some other masters, are especially distinguished. Unfortunately, however, these compositions are often unduly overrated by enthusiastic admirers, above the works of foreign composers of that age. It is, moreover, a fact, that Italy was the principal nurse of church music, and possessed the most distinguished composers. The Flemish masters were celebrated even earlier than those of any other nation. In Spain, church music was highly cultivated, and distinguished composers, as Morales, Ludovico Vittoria, and others, were drawn thence to Italy. In Germany we find the Chorale in its highest excellence; besides admirably greater compositions for choir-singing. As an example, may be noticed the *Ecce, quomodo moritur justus*, by Jacobus Gallus, of which Handel thought so highly, and from which he borrowed a whole passage in the chorus, "But their name liveth evermore," in his anthem for the funeral of Queen Caroline.

It can be only advantageous to acknowledge and accept what is good and suitable for our purpose, even if it be of foreign growth.

The introduction of a universal book of metrical psalms and hymns, in which the best tunes should be collected and preserved in their purity, would be so great an advantage for the improvement of congregational singing, that it must be pointed out here, though many difficulties may oppose its realization. If in its compilation the assistance of the most able musicians were secured, we should probably obtain a collection of the most beautiful sacred songs, in which music and poetry would be intimately united. And if in the poetry really religious inspiration and poetical beauty prevailed, and if the work were compiled with due regard to the actual requirements and prepossessions of the people,

there can be no doubt that it would be welcomed by many a congregation.

It might be used in schools; and this would assist in making the congregation better acquainted with it. For those churchgoers who know a little of music, it would be an excellent guide for learning and teaching the tunes. It would, perhaps, give occasion for singing sacred music sometimes in family circles. It would, for those who take sincere interest in the maintenance of a pure and elevating style of congregational music, be a useful means of controlling the musicians, and of preventing deteriorations. Its more universal adoption would facilitate the churchgoer in joining at once in the singing of the people with heartiness and fervour, whatever church he might enter. And the book would also be a valuable assistance to the organist. Adequately supplying his wants, it would leave him no pretext for introducing inferior compositions.

Also, a similarly-approved collection of organ compositions, as voluntaries, preludes, &c., might be of the greatest use. And, if the organist were under some obligation to make use of this collection, it would, in most instances, be only advantageous.

However excellent such collections might be, still a revision of them, from time to time, would be desirable.

Lord Bacon says :—"Time is the greatest innovator; and if time of course alter things to the worse, and wisdom and counsel shall not alter them to the better, what shall be the end?" If we disregard this, it cannot surprise if we remain behind, and if our church music does not exactly answer its purpose.

Still, there are not a few persons who maintain that church music which is at any one time appropriate must always

remain so. Reading of those heathen soldiers who, about 1500 years ago, being sent out to persecute the Christians, entered the Duomo in Milan, and, overpowered by the music, embraced Christianity, they will conclude, did we but possess that music, we should have all that could be desired. It is, however, not impossible that the same music would, in our time, drive the most devoted worshipper out of church.

Some take as a rule, that any new music ought to be in strict imitation of the best old which we possess. But it is not by the composer imitating the compositions of other masters, by which his genius is fettered, that we can expect to obtain something really good from him. And as those excellent composers who lived in past centuries have used all the means which the art offered in their time, should not also our present composers use the advantages which we possess, in consequence of the progress which the art and science of music has subsequently made? Is there, really, any reason to assume, as is often done, that our present composers are devoid of the devotional feeling requisite for the creation of sacred works? If their secular compositions are generally superior, the cause may be mainly ascribed to the small encouragement given them in sacred music. The consequence is, that often the more distinguished ones abstain from writing for the Church, until, perhaps, they feel their power of invention in secular music beginning to flag. No wonder, then, that many modern compositions, intended for the service of the Church, are insignificant.

People must be familiarized with Good Music.—Nothing is so conducive to the improvement of the taste for music as a familiarity with our best musical compositions.

An acquaintance with good *secular* music is the more

recommendable for acquiring a just appreciation of genuine church music, because therein is to be found a richer field for the refinement of the taste; since many of our best composers have excelled chiefly in secular music.

Another reason why the cultivation of secular music must be earnestly advised, is, the ennobling influence which it may have upon the morals of the people. If it conduces to make men better and happier, it must obviously tend indirectly to the proper celebration of divine worship, as well as to the improvement of our devotional music.

It is the more unnecessary to prove that good music possesses ennobling power, as this opinion has been always held by wise and distinguished men. Herder, for instance, says :—"Through music mankind becomes humanized. Though speech may fail to touch the benighted heart, words on wings of heavenly music may yet find entrance."

And Luther :—"Music is a half discipline and school-mistress to make the people gentler, milder, more moral, and wiser."

On the other hand, it is undeniable, and was observed so long ago as by Plato, that music may be of such a kind as to exert a corrupting influence, even without being wedded to immoral words. For this reason it is doubly important that a familiarity with only that music which is really good should be aimed at.

From this must not be inferred that only such music as is of a particularly elevating nature could be worthy of consideration; still less that people should sing only psalms and hymns. Cheerful music is especially desirable, since innocent amusements are conducive to man's happiness. The natural want of cheerfulness in Englishmen has been often observed

by foreigners. Froissart already says:—"They take their pleasure in sadness." If there is any truth in the foreigner's notice, what remedy more efficacious than the cultivation of cheerful music?

A usual prejudice in England, by which the progress of church music is much prevented, is, that the cultivation of music is more suited for ladies than for gentlemen. This view did not always prevail. At the time of Queen Elizabeth it seems to have been expected of a true gentleman that he should be skilled in this art. Peacham, in his *Compleat Gentleman*, says:—"I desire no more in you than to sing your part sure, and at the first sight, withall, to play the same upon your violl, or the exercise of your lute, privately to yourselfe."

And in Thomas Morley's work, *A plaine and easie Introduction to Practicall Musicke*, published in the year 1597, we read:—"But supper being ended, and musicke bookes (according to the custome) being brought to the table; the mistresse of the house presented me with a part, earnestly requesting me to sing; but when, after many excuses, I protested unfainedly that I could not, every one began to wonder. Yea, some whispered to others, demaunding how I was brought up: so that, upon shame of mine ignorance, I goe now to seeke out mine old friend, Master *Gnorimus*, to make my selfe his scholler."

The cultivation of music is, moreover, especially beneficial to gentlemen, because their occupation is not unfrequently of such a nature that the nobler feelings are repressed rather than aroused.

In Germany, even in the army, choruses are formed, and thus for the common soldier a cheerful and innocent entertainment is ensured in leisure hours. How great might have

been the advantage in our recent war, had the English soldiers been able to beguile their comfortless moments by such a delightful recreation !

That also the English nation possesses a great susceptibility for music cannot be denied. Much might, therefore, be achieved by the musician, to make the people more familiar with music of a pure and ennobling stamp. Indeed, if the musician is impressed with the true aim of his art, he cannot but consider it as a duty to promote the diffusion of such music as is really worthy of becoming universally known.

At present, however, to many musicians the art is nothing more than a milch-cow, from which they draw their daily subsistence. They know often quite well that the music with which they occupy themselves, is worthless ; but their exclusive object is to make money.

It is also a deplorable fact that the majority of musicians are themselves but partially familiar with our great master-works. As a proof of this assertion may be noticed how little the great vocal compositions of Sebastian Bach are known to most English musicians. And Gluck—that genius !—from no other master can be better learnt how beautifully and powerfully the sentiment of the words may be rendered in music ; how seldom is his name even mentioned !

Thus several others of our best classical masters might be cited, whose works, notwithstanding the high opinion often expressed of the progress made in music, are to the majority of musicians almost as if they did not exist.

In pianoforte music we find the same, though the pianoforte is the most favoured instrument of all. It would be easy, if this did not lead us too far, to point out a number of classical pianoforte compositions which are entirely unknown to most professional pianists.

The consequence is, generally, a certain one-sidedness and predilection for some composer, and a want of a clear and unbiassed judgment in matters of art.

Particularly striking, also, is the ignorance of most musicians of National Music. Almost all nations possess songs and dances, peculiarly their own, often highly beautiful and instructive on account of their originality, truth, and simplicity. Besides, this music is sometimes especially interesting in a historical point of view, as being connected with certain national events. But how few musicians there are who think it worth while to become well acquainted with, and to learn to distinguish the characteristic features of, the national music in different countries !

It would, however, be out of place here to pursue this topic further ; and enough has, probably, been said to convince the reflecting reader that, by cultivating and promoting the better kind of music, the professional musician may exercise a most beneficial influence, not only upon the morals of the people, but also upon the improvement of our music in church, and of the celebration of divine worship altogether.

What a beautiful vocation would the artist thus have ! and how much would he himself gain in popular esteem !

Indeed, it is not unlikely but, in this case, the Government would be more inclined to patronise the art, and to encourage the artist.

Leibnitz says :—"The Sybarites offered prizes to those who would invent new pleasures. A Christian country, I believe, ought to feel most deeply indebted to those who succeed in making virtue and piety the most agreeable and the most delightful to the people."

We shall now proceed to recapitulate briefly the chief conclusions at which, in the course of our reflections, we have arrived. This may serve to impress them more forcibly upon our memory.

Should, however, any argument have appeared not sufficiently convincing, it may, perhaps, lead others to inquire more earnestly into the subject; and thus, at least, the book may indirectly do some good.

Summary of the Conclusions arrived at.

1. The purpose of Church Music is to promote the glorification of God and the edification of man. Church music is, consequently, for all people.
2. In order that the object of church music may be attained as fully as possible, it is incumbent upon every church-goer to assist in its cultivation.
3. Church music, to answer fully its purpose, must be the expression of fervent devotion. It must be subservient to the worship. It must be intelligible to the congregation collectively. It must be beautiful, and especially melodious. It must be quite in accordance with the words to which it is wedded, and must allow a proper accentuation of the words. It must be original, and not in any way arranged or mutilated.
4. Even genuine church music may, under some circumstances, be highly inappropriate for devotional worship; for instance, if it is not strictly in accordance with the character of the service; if it is too difficult for the performers; or if it is too long, &c.

5. The following conditions are indispensable for dignified congregational singing :—People must sing in tune. They must observe the proper pronunciation of the words. They must be able to sing with a certain ease. They must sing the melody without making any alterations in it. They must neither overstrain the voice, nor exert it too little. They must sing with fervour and expression; and the singing must be in a movement which is suitable to the general impression of the words.
6. As a general rule, congregational singing ought to be in unison, with organ accompaniment in harmony.
7. The following conditions are requisite for a proper congregational singing in unison :—All the people must join. The male and female voices must be in proportion to each other. The unison must be sung with precision. Every one must keep strictly to singing the melody (*cantus firmus*). And the organ accompaniment must be in dispersed harmony.
8. The kinds of sacred musical compositions most suitable for the whole congregation are :—Metrical psalms and hymns, chants, and short impressive melodies, as the responses to the Commandments, &c.
9. In selecting the music for congregational use, it is especially important that a discriminating regard be paid to the requirements of the individual congregation; and care ought to be taken religiously to preserve the unity of the Liturgy.

10. The organist must be a religious man. He must be a skilful player. He must be well acquainted with the character of the different stops. He must possess theoretical knowledge, and good taste and judgment. And he must have some knowledge of the construction of the organ.
11. It is especially desirable—indeed, in many instances, quite necessary—that the organist should be able to sing; that he should possess talent for composition, and be acquainted with the history of music, and possess some general information.
12. The organ is the most suitable instrument to be used as accompaniment in congregational singing. Choir singing may, however, in many instances, be better without any instrumental accompaniment at all, or with accompaniment of an orchestra.
13. The organ accompaniment in congregational singing must be simple and dignified, and must not overpower the voices. Musical pieces for the organ alone must be strictly in conformity with the spirit of the service. Extempore performances are seldom good, and ought not to be encouraged.
14. The chief object of the introductory voluntary must be to direct and prepare the feelings of the worshippers for the service. The prelude has to give, in expressive and solemn tones, the key in which the following psalm or hymn is to be sung, and to indicate the prevailing character of the song itself. The concluding voluntary

ought to express condensedly and powerfully the spirit of the worship, as it has been spoken out in the prayers, the sermon, and the songs of praise.

15. Choir-singing must be correct and pure, in execution as well as in harmony. It must be for female voices (or the voices of children) and male voices, united. And the different parts must be always in proper relation to each other.
16. Interspersed solos, duetts, and similar compositions for one or more single voices, are generally apt to lessen the sublimity and dignity of choral music. On some extraordinary occasions, however, they may be elevating and proper.
17. Any figurate choral music in which the words are distorted, and made incomprehensible and confused, is not likely to promote the chief object of church music, however excellent it may be in other respects.
18. If the congregation join in the part-singing of the choir, it must be disparaging to the purity and excellence of the harmony, though it may possibly be advantageous in other respects.
19. If church music is ever to arrive at a higher state of perfection, it is necessary that music should form part of the education in all the schools of the country.
20. The maintenance of good congregational singing would be best ensured by the formation of parochial associations for its promotion.

21. Care must be taken to appoint competent musical officials. The existence of institutions for their training, in which their competence would be ascertained by an examination, before being appointed to a place, would be especially advantageous.
22. The clergyman ought to be acquainted with music. He must especially be able to sing, to control the musical officials, and to assist the people with his advice and good example, concerning the music of the church.
23. There must be some authorized collections of church music, compiled by a competent body of the clergy, assisted by distinguished musicians. These collections must comprise the most appropriate music for choir-singing, for congregational-singing, and for the organ.
24. People must be more familiarized with good music in general. An acquaintance with good secular music would not only tend to refine the taste, and assist in making the people happier and better; but it would also greatly facilitate the right understanding and appreciation of church music.

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